

B. Richards 1796

AN
A C C O U N T
OF THE
R I S E, P R O G R E S S,
A N D
P R E S E N T S T A T E
OF THE
S O C I E T Y
FOR THE
D I S C H A R G E A N D R E L I E F
O F
P E R S O N S i m p r i s o n e d f o r S M A L L D E B T S.

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A N

A C C O U N T, &c.

THE laws of this country have amply provided for the relief of *considerable* Debtors. The man, who engages for thousands which he cannot pay, may have a resource in bankruptcy ; he resigns his all, and resumes his occupation and his credit. The man, who for the *necessaries* of life, to supply his dependant family, runs a few pounds, or only a few shillings in debt, is cruelly arrested, torn from his home, and his business ! and plunged in a prison ; has neither ability nor hope to defray his Creditor's demands.

B

Look

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Look upon the books of our Society, and you will learn that *Manufacturers, Mechanics, Labourers, Seamen*, and other useful members of the meaner, but essential branches of Trade, whether natives or foreigners in distress, is a sufficient claim to the Society's regard; who ever prefer the cases of the most useful Artificers, and Manufacturers with the largest families; men who derive their sustenance from their daily labour; who being cut off from that labour by imprisonment, occasion a considerable loss to the Common-wealth, and bring a heavy burden on others by the charitable maintenance which themselves and their families must have from parochial or other supply.

Imprisonment for debt is *unjust*, in a comparative view of the Law, to suffer the Debtor, whose debts perhaps materially affect a very extensive circle, to enjoy freedom and impunity; whilst the Debtor, whose inconsiderable contracts

tracts cannot much affect any, is immured in a grievous and noisome prison.

The peer or senator (in England) only are exempt from personal arrests, and a detention of many hours, by the evasions and delusions of Bailiffs: but if a person in a lower class of life owes, or if his creditor swears he owes, only forty shillings, his creditor may obtain a Writ, and by a false oath, prevent his debtor from transacting business of the utmost importance to a numerous family, and to the benefit of the State, which may require the utmost expedition that very day or hour:---and passion, malice, or revenge, may be the only motive of the Creditor, to arrest his Debtor before the account of his demand is delivered, without any previous application for payment, and consequently without his refusal or delay.

The payment of the whole sum at the instant of the arrest, is not sufficient

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to obtain immediate liberty, or to prevent an expensive and deplorable privation of it for many hours, or days, if the Writ is issued out of the Sheriff's Office; as the Bailiffs often detain the Person arrested, to his present and future inconvenience, expence, discredit, and, probably his ruin, under their false and iniquitous general pretexts ---to examine the Office---or that the Office is shut, as it happens to be at certain hours and days; so that if a man happens unfortunately to be arrested upon a Saturday at night, or is designedly so from malevolence, he must be subject to the impositions of a Spunging-house at least till Monday.

The Debtor's own house, or apartment, is not always a refuge against such malevolent arrests. A man is liable to them in his own apartment, or, though the Law prohibits the forcible opening of a door, the Bailiffs find means to evade that prohibition by indirect, unjust

just stratagems, or bribery of servants, and even by force; of which instances often occur in this town.

Imprisonment for debt is in the highest degree *impolitic*, as many of the most useful, and necessary Members of the State are secluded from performing their part in the community---being deprived of their time and their strength, become at once obnoxious and burthensome to it.

Imprisonment for debt is no less *impolitic*, as it tends to increase those Parish-rates, already so grievous a weight upon the community, that every man justly complains of them. But if the poor Manufacturer or Labourer, whose industrious hands provide his wife and numerous offspring necessary bread, is shut up in prison, and withheld from that industry, his wife and children unavoidably become a heavy incumbrance to the Parish.---Many instances of this kind have been known to the Society, especially one whom they had set at liberty,

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had a wife and *ten children* unprovided for, whom he had supported before his imprisonment by his trade. His numerous family had been supported during his confinement *entirely by the Parish!* What a burden!—how extensive the utility of this institution?

The *ill-policy* of imprisonment for small debts deserves particular attention, as being a pregnant source of those frequent and numerous Emigrations, so prejudicial to our country. It has been justly observed, “ That no nation produces so many Fugitives for Debt, as the English, owing to the defects in our laws relative to arrests, and the encouragement given to merciless creditors by them. Those Fugitives establish Manufactures abroad, in Asia, Africa, and America, ; thither thousands go every year and thereby contribute to depopulate this island. The apprehensions of a sudden and long privation of liberty, without any previous summons, for any debt

debt occasions more emigrations than is generally imagined, or could possibly happen, if reasonable notice to debtors by previous citations, was ascertained by Law.

The practice of imprisonment for small Debts thus appears evidently *unjust*, *impolitic*, and therefore prejudicial to Society; to which it may be added, that it is also *inhuman!* We will not say *unchristian*, for the practice breathes nothing of that mild and gentle law of love.

A poor fellow-creature, perhaps for the immediate support of life, through sickness, unavoidable losses and disappointments, or—perhaps through indiscretion,—runs a few pounds in debt with his fellow-creature. He hath no means to pay, but such as arise from his personal industry, and manual labour. The Creditor will have no mercy! the wretched victim is seized, thrown into prison, totally prevented from relieving himself or doing justice to others, and

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thus left to languish in confinement, till death or some fortunate accident shall bring him deliverance! What end can be answered by this?—what good can be done?—Every feeling of humanity reverts from the proceeding, and it will scarce be believed in this age and kingdom of philanthropy, that such cruelties are exercised, from *man to man*, even for the mean, the paltry sum of *eighteen pence*; or that for *five shillings* a subject of Great Britain's happy constitution may languish three calendar months amidst the felons of *Newgate*!—Our Books attest the fact*.

We

* A person committed to the Gatehouse for 1*s. 6d.* was a poor lame industrious creature who had not to pay; this miserable debtor was charged in Execution, and the expences of the prosecution increased the debt to *one pound five shillings and six-pence*! If the man could not pay *one and six-pence*, when at liberty, how was he to discharge this accumulated debt under confinement.—The poor are frequently committed to Newgate by the Court

We may go farther still, and, to the *injustice*, *ill policy*, and *inhumanity* of the proceeding, add its *immorality*. Nothing is so likely to corrupt the morals, as a **Gaol**; into which, with whatever principles the unhappy debtor enters, he is compelled to associate with the vilest and most profligate, whereby good principles by degrees become relaxed, and he too soon catches and copies the manners of those with whom he is conversant. It is an old, but an indisputable truth, that *evil communications corrupt good manners*: and what the communications in a common prison are, who can doubt? So that by the inhuman practice of imprisonment, a man not *guilty* but *unfortunate*, incurs the hazard of the great-

Court of Conscience, for trifling sums from one shilling to 39 shillings; and the process, fees, etc. commonly trebles the original debt: though it must be mentioned to the credit of Mr. Akerman's (the keeper's) humanity, that he takes but half his dues from these small debtors.

est and most destructive of all losses, the loss of his integrity.

Another evil consequence of imprisonment for debt, deserves to be particularly attended to; the *infamy*, which in the general esteem is too commonly imputed to it. To have been in a Gaol, however unjustly, is with many narrow-minded persons a sufficient reproach;— and indeed, in the cruel opinion of the world in general, *criminality* is often at no great distance from *misfortunes*. This is the rather to be lamented in the case of those persons, who are the objects of our present consideration: for, Reputation is generally with them, not only the main support of their credit, but the very source of their employment and daily bread. Take this away, or materially impugn it, and they will find it difficult, with all their industry and desire of doing well, to find persons willing to engage with them. “ The man is just “ come out of prison, or has lain there

“ for

“ for some time,” is an observation sufficient to blast all his honest designs. Thus we have another proof of the baneful effects of the imprisonment complained of.

Why then is a practice so *unjust* and *impolitic*, so *inhuman* and *immoral*, so disgraceful to our laws and constitution, still countenanced amongst us?

“ Lord *Bacon* writes, that no man could be arrested for debt in England, according to our constitution.”

“ Sir *William Temple* observes, That detention for debt is greatly injurious to a nation, and wishes that no such law or custom existed in this land of Liberty.

“ Lord Chancellor *Talbot* often declared, That the debtor sufficiently pays a debt of any sum by an imprisonment of three months*, according to the principles of real humanity and good policy.”

* This idea the Society have adopted, by proportioning the composition for debts, to the length of time the debtor has been confined.

One would hope the opinions of three such great men sufficient authorities, to induce all humane and patriotic Legislators to propose and concur in a law conformable to their judicious sentiments. The number of prisoners for any, especially small debts, is not only a disgrace to the nation, legislature, humanity, and laws, but also a considerable loss and prejudice of some hundred thousand pounds every year to the State and community, upon due calculation.

Yet in opposition to those great legislators, the common practice of the attorneys and their colleagues militates against common sense, equity, justice, and the real welfare of the community in general, and of each individual, debtor and creditor, in particular.

The *inequality* of punishment by imprisonment for debt, is notoriously oppressive and unjust.—Every member of the community is, by the laws of society
intitled

intitled to *equal* protection, and is liable to *equal* punishment for transgressions against the members of that community; it therefore cannot be a greater crime for one Briton to contract a debt of two or three shillings in one part of London, than for another to contract a like debt in another part of London, or in Westminster; but this is not the case; such is the practice, that if a man contracts a debt, of only *one shilling* for necessaries for his, perhaps, numerous family; when the debt is proved in a Court of Conscience, he may be committed to Tothil-fields or Clerkenwell Bridewell for forty days, which imprisonment annuls the debt, and the debtor is discharged on paying his fees of five shillings at *Tot-hill*, or seven shillings at *Clerkenwell*;— but if the same person should be committed to Newgate by a warrant from the Court of Conscience for a debt of *one shilling*, he must remain there *ninety* days before his imprisonment will cancel

cel the debt, the *inequality* of punishment in those two prisons, for the enormous crime of *poverty*, in an equal degree of criminality, is notoriously oppressive. But farther; if the same person for the same crime should be committed to either of the compters of *Wood-street* or the *Poultry*, *NO* time of imprisonment can cancel the debt; the poor culprit, if he be a culprit, may remain in prison during his life, surrounded by repeated successions of felons in chains, whose prior occupiers had from time to time been relieved by the gallows, or removed to the ballast-lighters; whilst he must remain a victim to his callous hearted creditor, to disease, to vice, to poverty, and to death, —for not being able to pay *one shilling*; except some sympathising fellow-creature, who knows and pities the misfortunes, and the faults of fallen humanity, should stretch forth the relieving hand to rescue the neglected object from the most abject and complicated distresses. Should such

such an one determine to pay the debt of *one* shilling and 8s. 10d. for costs of suit to the plaintiff; he must also pay 15s. and 8d. for fees before the wretch can have his liberty.—It is submitted, whether persons, who have been long confined under execution from the Courts of Conscience, should pay as high fees as other debtors, who may be under process or execution from the superior courts, for scores or hundreds of pounds? —A short time since, a poor destitute girl under twenty years of age and believed to be virtuous, was committed in execution for **EIGHT** Pence, which together with the costs of suit and fees amounted to 18s. and 4d.

But the instances of injustice and oppression are not limited to persons committed in execution by the courts of Conscience;—the *glorious uncertainty* in the common practice of the law spreads its baneful influence over the other and superior classes of the useful members in

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community, by their unwarrantable demands for *visits** — discharge fees—and attendance, &c.

The *benevolence* which hath given us being as a society calls upon us thus to declare the result of our experience. Our books are continually open for the inspection of the public, as our meetings are to such gentlemen as wish to concur in the humane design of relieving the distressed, or promoting a reformation respecting those laws or customs that relate to the impolitic practice of imprisonment for debt.

Such reformation is not less practicable in ours, than in any other country;

* This charge is made when an officer, of his *own will*, would carry the prisoner to one compter, and he insists upon being taken to another; then, before the debtor can be discharged, the attorney takes the advantage of raising a fee under the pretext of an enquiry, if any detainer is lodged against the debtor; who, though he has discharged the debt for which he was confined, and also the costs, and fees, must submit to, and pay for the attorney's *seeking* another cause for keeping him in prison.

impri-

imprisonment may be so regulated as to secure the creditor, and give stability to his property. For without all question, the wisdom of Legislation can as easily provide for the mutual advantage of creditor and debtor, in *smaller*, as in *greater* concerns. As matters at present are circumstanced, the creditor is little more benefited by arrests and imprisonment than the debtor himself. Such is the case, if we may be allowed to judge by our experience; whence we are fully taught, that the end designed by the creditor (the recovery of his debt) is by no means obtained by the cruel method of long or uncertain confinement.

Far the greater part of those who have been relieved by the public bounty through our means, have obtained their liberty by a *composition* to their creditors;—been *superceded*;—or set free for the payment of their fees; whilst their creditors have suffered the entire loss of the debt.

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We cannot help specifying a particular case, in confirmation of the above assertion. A young man, with a wife and five young children, who had an employment in one of the public offices, was arrested for several different sums to the amount of an hundred pounds or more; and, as he had nothing to pay, he remained fifteen months in prison, was deprived of his employment, and then all his actions were superseded by the Society for 6*l.* Thus the *creditors* lost their several debts, and paid their own attorneys! While the *debtor* lost fifteen months of the prime part of his life, and an employment, by which, with attention and industry, he might in time have paid his creditors, and supported his unfortunate wife and infants!

It is to be feared, criminal reasons may sometimes influence the minds of creditors in the imprisonment of their debtors. Resentment, and a thirst of revenge may incite some to have recourse to

to this dreadful punishment ; passions of this sort should at all times be discounted, and the power of gratifying them never put into the hands of individuals, by the laws ; because the only just and allowable end of imprisonment for debt is defeated by it. Whilst we are tender of the creditor's property, we ought to be equally tender of the debtor's liberty ; and to remember, as a counter-balance to the severity of *Justice* on one hand, that *Mercy* should hold the scale on the other.

LIFE, only life remains the plaintiff's prize ;—
Grief pays the tribute, and the debtor dies.

If the common practice of the law of arrests thus militates against the creditor's advantage, and if the debtor is more cruelly punished by it, than the most notorious malefactor,—it surely is time to provide some method better adapted to the interest of both, as well as to the interests of society in general.

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As the laws of arrests and imprisonment for debt now stand, they are a disgrace to our constitution; for by those means, actions the most unjust and injurious, the most cruel and inhuman may be and are daily practised. Under the sanction of those laws, the innocent man who owes not a farthing, may be barbarously torn from his family, before any proof of guilt or wrong is, or can be given; he may languish many months in confinement without a possibility of redress: and at length, the plaintiff, who hath done him this wrong, may either be beyond the reach, or unworthy the hand of just retribution, while the innocent man may have endured the greatest distress, attended with the most ruinous consequences! Several instances occur, and can be cited of persons capable of making false Affidavits of Debt, who having procured a writ, arrest and imprison the pretended debtor, then decamp, or become insolvent; the prisoner must remain

remain in confinement many months, or two or three terms before his release, and then can have no damages for the perjury or false imprisonment, but by a process at law which he hath not money to engage in. No writ should therefore be issued upon an Affidavit only, nor without the security of two substantial House-keepers for the appearance of the Plaintiff at the trial, and his abiding by the decision of the Court : this would prevent many false oaths, and false imprisonments, to the ruin of numbers, and the destruction of their families.

Such public and private national injuries from the caprice, malevolence, obstinacy, and even barbarity of Creditors, should be effectually prevented without delay.

Many nations have such humane, prudent laws, particularly France, Flanders, Switzerland, Holland, &c. where no person can be arrested for Debt without three previous Summons, and even not then
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in his own house, apartment or shop, though the doors be open; nor on Sundays, that the public and private free exercise of moral and religious duties may not be obstructed by private civil causes.

The present laws of arrests are enormous, absurd, irrational, and injurious to the State, the Debtor, and the Creditor, enriching only *Pettifoggers*, *Bailiffs*, and *Jailors*, who generally are the worst, meanest, and most detestable of men. A new code of laws relative to arrests seems to be absolutely necessary, which may be consonant to Reason, Equity, Humanity, Policy, and to a free political Constitution.

No person can be arrested for debt, according to the Laws of Scotland, without previous warning; for the debtor must have the notice of fifteen days, by a summons to some court, and there have a fair hearing; if the debt be just, a caption is granted, but if he is in arrest,

arrest, and pays or compromises the sum, he is immediately released, and cannot be detained a moment for the costs, which are always *solely* paid by the *creditor*, to prevent malevolent and illegal processes; but if the debtor is imprisoned, he may inform his creditor, by a Public Notary, of his intention to take the benefit of the Queen's Act for Insolvent Debtors, and after an imprisonment of eight days, he goes before a magistrate, and makes a cession of all his effects, upon oath, which instantly releases him, unless a revengeful creditor will *aliment* him, which must be done that very hour, and the magistrate is empowered to compel the creditor to give the allowance of *aliment* every day, according to the birth, station, or family of the prisoner during his imprisonment, at six, twelve, or eighteen-pence a day.*

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* In England the debtor is allowed only a groat a day, for which he must wait three whole terms (near

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The salutary effects of these laudable measures prevent vexatious arrests and long imprisonments, to the ruin of the subjects, and to the detriment of the State.

It will scarcely be believed, that in this kingdom, so justly applauded for its laws and liberty, such powers are lodged in the hands of individuals as give them a right, in cases of arrest, over every thing but the *lives* of their fellow-creatures. But let us hope that such laws and such powers will not long exist; and happy will this Society be, should they be made instrumental to the abolition of this *cruel, unjust and impolitic* practice—this vile opprobrium of our *Laws*—our boasted *Liberty*—and *Christianity*.

(near a Year) but the debtors committed in execution by the Court of Conscience, can have NO allowance whatever; — yet, in the City-Compters, they may remain during life under an execution for *five shillings*.

Ah,

Ah, little think the gay, licentious, proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround ;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste ;
Ah, little think they, while they dance along,
How many pine in want and dungeon glooms,
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs ! How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, and eat the bitter bread
Of misery ! Sore pierc'd by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty ! How many stand
Around the death bed of *imprison'd* friends,
And point the parting anguish !—

—Can I forget the generous band,
Who touch'd with human woe, redressive search'd
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail ?
Unpity'd and unheard where misery moans,
Where sickness pines, where thirst and hunger
burn, *

THOMSON.

The Committee observe with pleasure,
that no charitable institution hath met

* The poet seems to allude to a similar undertaking, by a late alderman and others ; wherein one of our Committee was concerned.

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with

with a more universal concurrence;* the first sums that were collected amounted to

* We have been informed of several legacies for the relief of prisoners, which are not applied to the purposes for which they were bequeathed. It would be a matter worthy enquiry, what other legacies are not yet discovered, besides the following which have long lain dormant.

1st. The legacy of Mr. Henry Brown, late linen-draper in the Borough of Southwark, of 50*l.* *per ann.* as may appear by the donor's will in Doctors Commons.

2. The legacy of Mr. James Dodd of 30*l.* *per ann.* to be paid out of a farm at Hartly-row, near Hertford-Bridge, in the county of Southampton; some years past in the occupation of Mr. Cile, who lived on the said farm.

3. The legacy of Arthur Child, of the county of Hertford, Esq; of 24*l.* *per ann.* to be paid out of 220*l.* *per ann.* lying in the parish of Stephenage in the said county. This legacy was left in the year 1669.

4. The legacy of Mr. Samuel West, citizen of London, of 16*l.* *per ann.* to be paid out of a ground rent

to only eighty-one pound one shilling, which the committee expended, and imagined the affair would then have ended; but the beneficence of the public would not permit the Committee to stop there; they voluntarily contributed abundantly; and the Committee as freely contributed their mites, and gave their attendance

rent arising from several houses in Coleman-street, London.

5. The legacy of Mr. John Hill, of Charlton, in the county of Kent, of 12*l. per ann.* to be paid out of an estate at Charlton aforesaid; some years past in the occupation of Sir William Longham. This legacy was left in the year 1654.

6. The legacy of the family of Lushingtons of 11*l. 13*s.* 4*d.* per ann.* as may appear by the donor's will in Doctors Commons.

7. The legacy of Robert Henley, Esq; of 10*l.* *per ann.* payable by the possessors of an estate lying near the church at Harrow on the Hill, in the county of Hertford, which estate is now, or was late, in the family of the Waldoes.

The foregoing legacies amount to 153*l. 13*s.* 4*d.* per ann.* and have not been paid to the poor prisoners for many years past.

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to an impartial distribution of the public bounty.—The benefits they have been instrumental in diffusing from the public benevolence to the distressed, will appear by the general accompts annexed to this tract, to which the reader is referred,—and he, perhaps, may there form an idea of the pleasure this Committee have received in their unremitting attention to their several posts in executing this labor of love to their fellow creatures.

Several executors and public bodies, intrusted with sums of money to be appropriated to the discharge of debtors, do annually pay those sums to the Society, observing that they can discharge as many persons for *one hundred* as any private person can for *two hundred* pounds. At first the Society paid from four to six pounds for the discharge of each debtor, but now, at an average, they pay about two pounds four shillings each.

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The benefactions annually received are nearly two thousand pounds, with which the Society discharge about nine hundred debtors. The Committee observe with concern, that in the last two years the distresses of the poor have increased; perhaps in proportion to the increase of the prices of provisions, and the decrease of trade and manufactures, which in a few years may operate to the destruction of the yeomanry or the middle class of the people;—the consequence will necessarily be, filling the army with soldiers or the kingdom with a banditti.

The Committee exult in observing, that no objections worthy the least notice have been urged against *this* plan; indeed, it speaks to the heart,—it addresses every one's sensibility, and every one's reason. Humanity and Justice equally plead for it; insomuch that similar institutions are already established in other parts of the kingdom: where they also view with horror the mode

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whereby our laws of arrests are at present executed by a strange misapplication of punishment, to oppress the innocent, and protect or release the fraudulent and designing.

If any one *can* commit an action to deserve perpetual imprisonment, it is the *collusive* debtor. Yet, strange as it may appear, the knavery and duplicity, which ought to bring down the severest censure of our laws, enables him to evade its effects; and he who deserves their punishment in the greatest extent, in reality the least sustains it; for imprisonment to a man of this disposition, becomes the ultimate of his intentions, whose machinations and plots, to accomplish his seeming destruction, have perhaps been agitated many months, previous to his apparent misfortune; who, with only the externals of insolvency, suffers an attachment on his person, with a purse flowing as his spirits. *Want*, the companion of the wretched, cannot affil him

him: Plenty decks his table, and convivial mirth attends it! The idea, that imprisonment can be a punishment to a man under these circumstances, must instantly vanish: he prepares for his catastrophe with the wizard of distress, and by that craft sets every danger at defiance; his property is conveyed by previous assignments, apparent gifts, spurious loans: and with the externals of poverty, he possesses a genial fortune, fabricated on the ruin of the credulous, honest, and unsuspecting dealer. Such is the *collusive debtor*, whose punishment may be said to produce an effect retrograde to its very intent, by benefitting those it was intended to correct.—Imprisonment therefore can be no punishment to the *collusive debtor*.

The *debtor from misfortune* is a character of a different tint; the very outlines of whose misery it is difficult to imagine; and whose real sufferings it is impossible to describe! Eager in the pur-

suit of honour, tenacious of reputation, and solicitous for the good opinion of the world, he labours through life with the greatest avidity, and honest industry; his wife, his children, and his reputation flourish around him, and bask in the sunshine of his prosperity: When, amidst this apparent security, perhaps the villainy or prejudice of his neighbours may blast his reputation;—a loss may be sustained by fire;—his credit may have been given too largely;—his engagements may have been too extensive, or his losses sudden and considerable:—From all, or any of these motives, his payments may not have been so regular and certain as customary; the consequence may be an arrest, and the unhappy man (who often suffers more from the ignominy and subversion of his fortune, than the creditor from the loss of his money) is in a moment dragged from his weeping wife and family, from his friends and from his dwelling;

dwelling ; and unable to satisfy his creditors, his property is confiscated ; his wife, his children, from affluence and comfort, are turned into the world in a state of poverty and misery !

It is in vain for a man in these circumstances to represent the honesty of his intentions. His ability to pay twenty shillings in the pound is fled, and with it every social virtue ; Such, at least, is the opinion of the *successful* part of mankind. Misfortune creates the metamorphosis, and the transition is instantaneous ; he, who before had honor and punctuality, whose reputation was unblemished, whose industry was commended, and whose religion and morals were quoted as examples to his neighbours, in a moment becomes divested of all. His honor becomes pride ; his reputation is thought duplicity ; his industry is interpreted cunning ; and his religion misconstrued hypocrisy :—Himself and family are ruined,—his credit

is lost,—his virtue contaminated, every comfort of life is denied; and, to compleat the catastrophe, the unhappy man, with principles of rectitude and equity but retarded by inability, is dragged *before a trial* to feel the rigors of imprisonment.

The recovery of the debt, the object of the plaintiff's pursuit, is defeated by his attempt to accomplish it, (*i. e.*) *confinement*. Various are the reasons which may be produced in proof of the assertion, but the following are perhaps the most eligible to consideration. When one person arrests another, he is supposed to do it with an intent of obtaining his debt, and therefore the money is expected, or a temporary and additional security by bail; on the failure of which, imprisonment generally follows, and if the first offers of a compromise are refused, the debtor has never an opportunity again of repeating them, because, from confinement, a decrease

crease of property becomes certain. For the expences arising to a debtor on his path to, and when in confinement, are very great ; and the inconsiderate plaintiff seldom gives himself time to reflect, that it is the property of himself and others, which is by these means hourly diminishing ; but, already precipitated in the stream, plunges on to the destruction of the debtor, and the certain loss of his debt ; seldom cooling to judge of the consequences, until his attention is awakened by a long bill from his attorney for the payment of the incidental charges. In the mean time the defendant finding the plaintiff inexorable, speedily converts every part of his substance into money, to support him while in confinement, and thereby consumes that property, which, if timely accepted, might have afforded a decent dividend. Thus both deceive themselves in their different pursuits ; and thence it is obvious that a pri-
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son is so far from leading to the recovery of the debt, that it becomes the whirlpool of the debtor's remaining property, which is presently ingulphed, and lost in the *vortex*.

It may be observed, that, "should any of the debtor's effects appear after he is imprisoned, and rendered in execution, the plaintiff can certainly avail himself by a *fieri facias*." This is admitted, but it may be necessary to know that it cannot be issued until a *discharge* of the imprisoned person be first obtained.

Therefore, confining the body to obtain a recovery of the debt, becomes perfectly nugatory, and in the nature and reason of things absurd; because, no property is attainable while the body is confined; consequently confinement operates against the recovery. If property, therefore, be the pursuit of the plaintiff, should it not be expected he would originally proceed against THAT, without attaching the body?

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It is true, if there are not sufficient effects to discharge the demand of the plaintiff, the body becomes answerable for the deficiency. But, as that body is supposed to be then in actual insolvency, and the process against a mere *corpus mortuum*; it can only serve to gratify the wantonness or malice of the plaintiff.

This truly savage disposition is too obvious in this, and in many other instances relating to debt; but in none more so, than in the arresting a body dead in law.

The *Recovery of the Debt* is frequently defeated by the creditor's not perfectly understanding the consequences of an arrest; who generally imagines that the expences finish with the writ, as the attorney, for the most part, is unwilling to intimidate him with an account of *Declarations, Notices, Issues, Judgment, and Execution, &c. &c. &c.* which must all have a regular proceeding; for, on the least lapse or default, the debtor becomes

comes dischargeable by *Superfedeas*, and the costs fall on the plaintiff, which are always considerable, and sometimes double or treble the original debt. Numbers are *thus* discharged from imprisonment every week from the Marshalsea, and from other prisons every term; the inability of proceeding, or dread of further expence, in the plaintiff, often determines him to lose the debt, rather than add to it by proceeding to execution.

The recovery of debt may also at any time be rendered void (should the debtor be of a dishonest principle, and possessed of a moderate portion of money) by bailing out the action before he is in execution: This is frequently done, and in consequence thereof the debtor's person becomes immediately at liberty; which may find a secure asylum beyond the seas 'till it is convenient and safe to return. It is true, the plaintiff, in this instance, has recourse to the bail; but

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it is seldom attended with success, as every term in Westminster-hall evinces; for the persons, who engage in these precarious securities, are sensible of their risque, and are therefore prepared against every attack, and so perfectly acquainted with every chicanery, that they generally tire the most expert and determined.

From the instances beforementioned, the *recovery of the debt* must appear very precarious, for tho' it be the stimulus to the pursuit of the plaintiff, yet it is rarely, if ever, accomplished. Imprisonment for debt, therefore, on its present foundation, is irrational and inconsistent; the very intent, or effect, being perfectly destroyed in the attempt; it is wantoning with the distresses of each other, with no other gratification than that of revenge;—it is proceeding against the unfortunate with a severity which the barbarity of savages would shrink at, and with a cruelty that humanity and

civil

civil policy must blush to acknowledge :
It is worse than *Domitian* catching flies.

It may be further observed, that, The execution or *remission* of punishment is totally in the creditor's power, and he becomes a despotic monarch, from whose determination there is no *appeal*, and whose arbitrary egotism nothing can remove, but the unanimous concurrence of the whole kingdom.

There is, perhaps, no nation in the universe (at least we hope so for the honour of its legislators) that permits such an authority to be exercised by one subject over the liberty and property of another. It may indeed be objected, that bail will prevent an immediate exertion of the power ; but, strange as it may appear, it is a fact, that many persons, in apparent flourishing circumstances, cannot procure bail ; and then, on the mere oath of the plaintiff, the debtor is committed close prisoner to a jail : and should it happen at the end of

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that term, which is previous to what the lawyers call the *long vacation*, he may then remain in this confinement six or eight months, without a possibility of enlargement, or in any manner determining the pretensions of the plaintiff; and at the expiration of this time, should they be found *specious*, the prisoner has no redress, but what is to be procured by a long and expensive law-suit, which his imprisonment has, perhaps, rendered him totally incapable of pursuing.

Should a man, from resentment or worldly advantage, be induced to commit *murder*, the present mode of imprisonment for debt securely points him out the path: for, on his *single oath*, he has it in his power to take out a writ, and confine the body of another, although he shall not be indebted to him, nor perhaps ever has been. Yet, as the punishment **PRECEDES** the conviction of the crime, the victim may, perhaps, suffer seven or eight months imprisonment before

fore the propriety of the proceeding is determined : during which time the man may become ruined in his reputation, and his real creditors, (governed, perhaps, by that common, but mistaken maxim, “ *That the unfortunate are always in the wrong,*”) may lodge detainers against him for sums, which it may then not be in his power to discharge ; when if the misery of his condition does not work upon him to destroy himself, or perish by a broken heart, he may securely be removed by medicine. For, notwithstanding the Jurors are obliged to sit on the body, the inquisition on a man who dies in confinement, (and therefore, for the most part, forsaken by his friends) carries with it more the *form* of law, than the *execution* ! Every vice, however flagrant, every oppression, however iniquitous ; may be perpetrated, by the present mode of imprisonment for debt.

“ If the custom of *arrest* cannot be abolished, nor imprisonment for debt removed :

moved: Both with propriety, at least, may be laid under such regulations, as shall be so reconcileable to prudence, and adequate to justice, that, while the confinement of the debtor is rendered easy and consistent, the claim of the creditor shall become more secure.

If ALL charges attending an *unjust* arrest, were to fall on the plaintiff, who should be compelled in a summary way to reimburse the debtor, without the formality of a tedious law suit, it may prevent a number of villainous and vexatious writs; nor will a man be obliged to lay many months in prison *only for his fees*, when he becomes dischargeable by supersedeas on the discontinuance of an action; for a debtor may frequently, from various causes, be relieved from the debt, and not have the power to pay cost or * fees: whereas, did they fall on the plaintiff, the debtor would

* It is an invariable rule with the society never to pay the attorney's costs of suit.—But they always pay the prison fees.

in consequence become dischargeable, whenever this action became supersedeable.

A man may be arrested from malice or caprice, without being applied to for the debt, and often without any account rendered; because the plaintiff, in the present instance, is sure not to suffer for his wantonness (unless it is carried to issue, which may not often be the case) and the costs consequently fall on the debtor, which, on the present fashionable mode of caption, by what the lawyers term a *special original*, often exceeds the debt. On the contrary, was the plaintiff eligible to the incurred expence, it would, in a great part, or perhaps totally put a period to such abuses, as he would never proceed to an arrest, without a positive probability of recovering the debt."

The practice of searching the office for a *Sifit*, mentioned page 16, should be abolished; the society have done their utmost to rectify this abuse.—A man may be arrested

arrested in either of the four counties, and although the money shall be paid in discharge of the debts and costs, together with every attending expence, yet shall this man be held in custody under pretence, * that “ the office must be searched before he can be discharged, to know if any other writs are against him, from a received opinion that the Sheriff is answerable for every writ that is against the debtor : This is notoriously trifling with the misfortunes of mankind, to augment the fees of office; for, if custom, as well as law, be founded on reason, it must declare, that the *Sheriff* is sufficiently exonerated by making a return to the real caption, without being expected to answer for those with which *he* is not actually charged. † This so flagrant an imposition

* Vide page 16.

† The society have frequently complained to the sheriffs of London and Middlesex of this abuse, which the attorneys call a *fit*, already yet

fition, and abuse of office, has long escaped that regulation it demands.—It may not, perhaps, be improper to observe, that in France “ no second charge can be lodged against the body, 'till it is free from the first.”

It is submitted, whether an arrest should be served in a man's dwelling; the debtor, on confinement, should be regularly proceeded against without any delay, until he is in execution; or in default of such proceeding, may sue out his supersedeas without waiting *three* terms as in the present practice of the courts.

hinted at in page 16 but cannot obtain an abolition thereof, altho' there is no authority for the demand, but in a book of rules made by the attorneys, who demand the fee, and whose principal plea for the exorbitant demand, is, “ *That thou buy their places, and must make the most of them.*” yet it should be remembered, for the honour of two or three attorneys, that they are ashamed of the imposition, and have given up the demand.

An

An attorney will object to this,—How can the debtor be proceeded against, in a vacation, when the courts do not sit?

—There lies the great part of the evil.—Perhaps the wisdom of the legislature may find a remedy, by a justice of the peace, or bench of justices on a rotation;

—Delay of justice is very injurious to a commercial people, and inconsistent with the idea of good government; yet it is common for the plaintiffs against persons committed to the city compters, to deliver *declarations*, but proceed no farther, until the debtor obtains, at his own expence, a rule of court to proceed to trial; which expence, though small, debtors have sometimes not been able to raise the money to defray in several months, and sometimes have been obliged to sell or pawn their cloaths or bedding for that purpose;—and after long confinement, their debts on trial have been found surreptitious; and tho' in that case the debtor may get his cause in a court

court of justice, yet he must be content with the loss of time—of goods—of reputation—and business.—They cannot prosecute the villain that ruined him, having no money for *law* or for *bread*.

The following hints may contribute to correct the mal-practice of imprisonment for small debts.

The abolition of Gaolers fees appears to be the ground work of such a reformation; No Goaler, or his dependants should be suffered to take any fee whatever—But salaries adequate to their trouble, should be paid to them by the Quarter Sessions, or other Community under whom they act.

But no Gaoler, (or attorney at the compters) should be allowed to purchase

The reader may receive further important information from the perusal of the Hon. Mr. Howard's Tract on the State of the Gaols in Great Britain—A work compiled from HIS most laborious inspection, and a Philanthropy that does honor to the writer, and the cause of humanity, in this age of luxury and dissipation.

their

their employments for any consideration whatever ; whilst that is permitted, the poor will be always harrassed by their impositions, for the reasons mentioned in the note, page 46.

When the debtor is in execution, his effects should be surrendered upon oath, and divided amongst his creditors ; but in consequence of such surrender, the body should be discharged, and the debt-free from all future demands, in the same manner as a certificated bankrupt.

If four-fifths of the creditors in number, and in value, shall at any time, while the debtor is it large, demand an inspection of his affairs, it should be deemed as an act of the whole body ; and the debtor be obliged to submit to such inspection : and the creditors may have it in their power to conclude such terms as shall seem to them most eligible, and which shall be binding to all the other creditors.

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No

No sale, assignment, or conveyance of any kind, made by the debtor, after the writ has been served, shall be effectual; all his effects being then considered as the property of his creditors.

As the above article makes the debtor speedily an insolvent, and his effects become the property of the creditors, one shilling per day may be paid to the debtor from the day of his imprisonment to the day of his discharge; out of the debtor's effects (if any) but otherwise at the expence of the plaintiff, or, in default thereof, the debtor to be discharged.

In the province of Jamaica, the land of abject slavery, no Freeholder can have a personal attachment served upon, nor is any *capias* permitted to issue against him, the proceedings being always against his property, which *only* becomes liable. In Holland, and in France, the debtor is no longer held, than whilst he can make

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a surrender of his effects, which is considered as an exoneration, and the body is free : Scotland, in the year 1754, to the honor of its administration, rejected the imprisonment of the body, as a spurious production, unknown to the mother law ; nor, indeed, is any thing more inconsistent with the rights of mankind ; and if the custom was authorized by the laws, it ought to be struck out of the general code, as a remnant of barbarism already exploded by all the wise commercial states in the world.

The instrument, called a declaration, was intended merely to set forth the *cause* of the *action*, and the defendant's refusal to make satisfaction to the Plaintiff ; and therein should always be inserted the names of two persons, *Pledges* to the defendant for carrying on the prosecution to a trial ;—But how are the laws of the land perverted by the practitioners of the law !

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By the common practice, the declaration need not be delivered to the debtor, until after the return of the writ, which may be several weeks,* more or less according to the distance of time from the arrest to the return of the writ, which is governed by the term; so that the prisoner is punished by imprisonment at the *will* of a fellow subject, *before* he is found guilty.—The declaration, which might be comprised in **EIGHT** Lines, is stretched and tortured by a *Farrago*, not of language, but of Babelisms, an unintelligible jargon of words without ideas, that would disgrace an Hottentot; and which, if printed in this book, would make eight pages;—add to this, that tho' the law has wisely provided, that two persons, on behalf of the plaintiff, shall be *pledges* to prosecute to a trial, yet the names of the *pledges* inserted in the declarations are fictitious; JOHN DOE and RICHARD ROE, who never existed, and therefore cannot

* See page 20 and 21.

be punished for being *pledges* to prosecute a false debt ; because they are not to be found in this world or the other.

Here appears an evil worthy the correction of the judges ;—a process at law, whereby an innocent man is punished without conviction—and that process carried on by a chain of LIES, and the LIARS protected from prosecution, by the corrupt practice of those laws ; or, by the amazing expence of prosecution against an unjust plaintiff or his associates.

Laws should be founded in EQUITY ; and the execution of them carried on in TRUTH ; or the former will be abhorred, and the latter contemned, so long as the subjects of their oppression have understanding to distinguish between *right and wrong* ; the laws of arrests, as practised, cannot be obligatory on any subject, because he cannot understand them.

Another injury arising from a long imprisonment, is, that the debtor's friends, tired with repeated applications, desert him; his connections from long captivity are lost, and a mind unsupported by philosophy and religion, is often vitiated by those connections; insomuch that when the prison doors become open for his enlargement, he in a manner stands alone, and deserted. Should his disposition lead him to labor, to whom shall he apply for employment? Friendless, forlorn, and unrecommended, the thriving world disclaim him; his necessities urge, and famine assails him. To relieve the calls of nature he has at last recourse to illicit practices; and with reluctance, becomes the companion of thieves, and midnight predators. Hence is augmented the Recorder's list; and Tyburn groans with the accumulated weight of these wretched malefactors! Hence our assizes are replete with felons; and our counties with executions.

The

The present mode of personal attachments for small Debts, is not only oppressive on the lower classes of the people, but injurious to the community, because the practice operates most against those who are the nerves and strength of that community ; whilst others, who are eventually cloathed and fed by them, in a superior class of Society, may find relief under insolvent circumstances, from the laws of bankruptcy. This superior class are useful in their rank of Society as drones are in an hive—they are necessary ; but the laboring bee fabricates the honey, and is most exposed to destruction by the mal-practice of those laws that should protect them.

The present king of Sweden, in the month of October, (1773) issued a proclamation, that “ For the future no person should be detained in custody, who “ gave up his *All* to satisfy his *just* “ *debts* ; and schedules of assets, stock “ in

“ in trade, rent-rolls of estates, and securities for money, shall be lodged with the committee of the corporation in each borough; whose syndic, or town-clerk, is to examine debtors on oath, in presence of a notary who must attest their discoveries, taken in writing, and signed by themselves; after which the debtor is to be discharged. Those who shall refuse to submit to such examinations, or endeavour to escape, in a clandestine manner, are to be sent to the gallies for life; and on rendering false accounts, to suffer death as felons.”

This edict is a proof of the humanity of the king of Sweden, and a plain indication, that the Swedes are proceeding to a total extirpation of the barbarous custom. Let not our kingdom then be the last to extirpate a procedure so destructive and oppressive to the subject, so contrary to the rights of nature, and so opposite to the law and constitution of

England,

England, whose founders, the ENGLISH SAXONS, knew not the practice ;—it is an exotic—a Norman curse, which none can justify or approve, but a profligate attorney.

Debtors, frequently from fear of the injuries they are exposed to by arrests, resolve to live in prison to spend those effects which might have been divided among mild creditors,—or portion out their fortunes to their families, in defiance of their creditors and the law, which step the debtor is induced to take from his reasoning, “ that while the body is held in prison, it is a satisfaction for the debt.”

The dread of imprisonment gives birth to many crimes, it is the nurse of knavery and evasion; whereas, the man in fluctuating circumstances, convinced that the greatest evil which could happen would be to give up ALL his property for the payment of his debts, would fearless stand in the face of his

creditors with a true disclosure and an honest surrender.

Far the greater number of the objects released by this Society are **MANUFACTURERS**, **SEAMEN**, **LABOURERS**, and **SERVANTS**, whose usefulness—cut off from society by imprisonment—is thus happily restored to the public, So that this charity claims attention not only from the humanity of its design, but also from the advantages which it derives to the community in general: Not to mention the relief thus afforded to the respective *parishes*, (upon which the wives and families of the wretched objects must in all probability have become a burden) and the benefits resulting to the honest *Creditor* from this salutary interposition to liquidate and discharge his demands by composition.

On a review of the Society's books, it appears that various considerable debts, to the amount of **SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS** and upwards, have been so compounded and reduced, as to bring

bring the objects so relieved within the scope and original intention of the charity; and at the time of compounding such debts, equal attention hath been constantly paid to the peculiar circumstances both of the creditor and his helpless debtor.

The utility of the charity will farther appear from the consideration, that every poor man's labour may be estimated, at an average, to be worth two shillings and sixpence per day, or three pounds five shillings per month; now the Society having set at liberty about six thousand such persons, the benefit, immediately derived to the community, will amount to thirty nine thousand pounds,* supposing each of those persons to have obtained their liberty only two months sooner than they would have obtained it, without the assistance of the Society; but if to this benefit diffused to the community, we add that of

* Near FOUR times the sum they have received from the public—Is not this a glorious harvest?

preventing such numbers and their families becoming burthensome to their several parishes, who can ascertain the amazing utility of this charity; a striking consideration, surely to the man—the citizen—the tradesman—the merchant—the senator—and the christian.

Encouraged,—greatly encouraged by the munificence of the public of every rank; the committee distributed their bounty as mentioned page 27. And to give the undertaking greater permanency, it was resolved to form a Society; and at a general meeting of the benefactors on the 5th of May, 1772,

The Rt. Hon. Lord ROMNEY accepted the office of President,

And the Rt. Hon. Ld. Chief

Baron SMYTHE,
Rt. Hon. Ld. BEAUCHAMP.
Hon. Mr. Justice NARES, and
JOHN THORNTON, Esq.

Vice-Presidents.

Mr. NEILD, Treasurer,

Mr. NELME, Secretary.

Then the following Rules and Orders were read and agreed to.

RULES

RULES AND ORDERS

OF THE

S O C I E T Y

FOR THE

DISCHARGE AND RELIEF

OF

PERSONS imprisoned for SMALL DEBTS.

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СИГНАЛЫ ОБРАЩЕНИЯ

RULES AND ORDERS

I. NAME of the CHARITY.

THAT this institution be called,
"The SOCIETY for the Dis-
CHARGE and RELIEF of Persons imprisoned
for SMALL DEBTS.

II. OFFICERS.

That this charity do consist of a President,
four Vice-Presidents, * a Treasurer,
Secretary and Committee.

III. COMMITTEE.

1. That the Committee be open to, and consist of all such persons as are qualified to be Governors.
2. That of the Committee five members constitute a quorum.

IV. MEETINGS.

1. That there be an ANNUAL MEETING, on or about the 5th of May.

* It has been found necessary to add a fifth;— one of the present Vice Presidents being in the East Indies: see their names in the general account annexed to this Tract.

2. That

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2. That there be four quarterly general meetings in every year.
3. And also a meeting of the committee on every * Wednesday evening during the winter months, or otherwise in the summer months, as to the committee may seem necessary and proper.
4. Of all which several meetings due notice shall be given by advertisement in the public news-papers.
5. That the place for holding all such meetings be at the *Thatched-House Tavern*, in St. James's street, or otherwise, † as shall be thought most convenient.
6. And that the weekly, or other meetings of the committee on Wednesday

* Weekly meetings were necessary in the *infancy* of this charity; but such forms have been adopted from the experience of the Committee, that, in its *maturity*, meeting once in a fortnight is found to be fully sufficient.

† The Society have found it necessary to take an office, at No. 7, *Craven-street, Strand*; where the business of the charity is now transacted.

evenings,

evenings, begin constantly at five o'clock, and end at eight; when the accounts are to be adjusted, and the books closed.

V. *Of the TREASURER.*

1. That he receive all benefactions, keep an account of all receipts and payments, and adjust the same at the four general quarterly courts, or oftener, if required by the rest of the governors.
2. He is to advance no monies on account of the charity, unless authorised thereto by writing under the hand of three of the committee, at the time of their Wednesday evening meetings.

VI. *Of the SECRETARY.*

He is to be present at all the meetings of the Governors, to take the minutes; receive and prepare all petitions; make the necessary enquiries, and report,

port to the committee concerning them; to draw up the accounts; and carry on the correspondence and business of the charity, under the direction of the committee.

VII. *Of GOVERNORS in general, and their Qualification.*

1. That this charity be supported by annual subscriptions, or other voluntary benefactions.
2. That all annual subscribers of or above the sum of two guineas, are, and shall be esteemed **Governors**, and of the Committee.
3. That if any annual subscriber shall be more than two years in arrear, his power as a Governor shall cease, until such arrears are paid.
4. That all benefactions at, or above the sum of twenty guineas, now are, and shall be esteemed perpetual **Governors**.
5. That

5. That the nomination of officers be in the Governors, and determined by a majority.

VIII *Of the Objects to be relieved.*

1. They shall be persons *actually* imprisoned, whose respective debts, or the composition for whose debts, shall not exceed the sum of **TEN POUNDS**.
2. That women shall be equally intitled to the benefit of this charity as men.
3. That such debtors shall have the preference **as** are most aged or infirm; have the largest families unprovided for; as are the most likely to be useful to the community, and appear to have lost their liberty by unavoidable misfortunes; at least *not* by fraud, vice, or extravagance.
4. That such imprisoned debtors **as** have helpless families, who suffer by the faults of their principal, and, are undeservedly reduced to poverty, the
com-

committee shall be at liberty to give the family some assistance, in proportion to their distresses, and agreeable to the intention of the charity.

5. That no person be delivered a second time, unless it shall appear to the committee that their second misfortune cannot be imputed to their own fault.
6. That an account be annually published of the number of persons discharged and relieved, but their names not mentioned; together with an account of the sums paid for them, and of the prisons from whence they were respectively discharged.
7. That at the time of discharge, a short printed EXHORTATION be given to every person released.

IX. *Of PETITIONS and PETITIONERS.*

That petitions be received only on a Wednesday. That the committee refer such petitions to the secretary, for his

his examination and enquiry, during the current week. That the report he shall make on them be considered at the next committee meeting; and that they be proceeded on accordingly, in preference to any other applications.

FORMS

F O R M S

F O R T H E

D E B T O R's Application to this
SOCIETY for RELIEF.

E ACH of the Gaolers send to the Society, a *Monthly List* of Debtors who desire relief, under the following heads:

Date of commitment,—name;—age;—profession;—number of family;—late place of abode;—sum sworn to by the plaintiff;—for what the debt was contracted;—plaintiff's name;—plaintiff's address;—and names of persons who will vouch for the debtor's character for sobriety, integrity, and industry.

Then the Debtor receives *gratis* from the gaoler a copy of the following printed Petition:

To the Right Honourable the PRESIDENT, the VICE-PRESIDENES, and the other Members of the Society for the Discharge and Relief of persons imprisoned for Small Debts.

The humble Petition of

late of

Street, in the

Parish of

in the County of

S M E W E T H,

SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioner—hath not received any relief from your Society heretofore; That he is in the Age: by profession a and hath *

Year of his * Insert the
Wife and
Number of
Children if
any.

THAT he was committed to this Prison of

+ Insert the
Side of the
Prison where
the Debtor is
confined.

Day of and is now
confined on the † side of the ‡ Insert the
said Prison, for a Debt of £ s. d. Plaintiff's
due to † Name, Pro-
‡ Insert the
Street, in the Parish of fice, and
for || Abode.

|| Insert what
kind of Va-
lue the Pri-
soner had of
his Plaintiff
for the Debt.

which Debt the Plaintiff hath sworn to, and proceeded against your petitioner to a §

§ Here men-
tion the De-
claration,
Trial, or
Judgment, as
the Case may
be; and if
supercedable,
the Time
when, and
for what
Reason.

THAT it may require £ s. d. to obtain your Petitioner's Liberry, who having no Effects or Power to discharge the same, most humbly prays to partake of your Bounty,

in

in such way as to you may seem meet ; and
refers to*

* *Insert the
Names, Pro-
fessions, and
Places of
Abode of two
Housekeepers
who are ac-
quainted
with the
Prisoner's
Case.*

of
in the Parish of
and
of
Street in the Parish of

for a Character of his Sobriety, Integrity, and
Industry.

N. B. DEBTORS who desire to partake of this
Charity, must apply by PETITION ONLY ; a
printed Form of which may be had of their respec-
tive Keepers GRATIS.

THAT Form must be filled up FULLY and
EXACTLY as above directed, or the Petition will
not be attended to, thereby the Petitioner's Case
will correspond with the Keeper's monthly List.

Let the PETITIONS be kept CLEAN, and sent
by the Penny-Post inclosed and directed
To be put into the LETTER-BOX, No. 7, in
CAVEN-STREET, STRAND.

~~It~~ An Attempt to impose on the SOCIETY in
ANY Particular, will prevent the Petitioner being
relieved.

When

When the Society receive the Petition, it is inclosed in a copy of the following Letter, and sent to the Person to whom the Petitioner refers for a Character; which, if approved of, renders the Petitioner an object of the Society's Attention.

Society for the Discharge and Relief
of Persons imprisoned for Small
Debts.

CRAVEN STREET, Strand, the 177
in the Gaol of a Prisoner
of £ for a Debt
having sent the
inclosed Petition for Relief, and referred to you
for a Character; the Society request the Favor of
a Line, with your Opinion concerning the Peti-
tioner's Character for SOBRIETY, INTEGRITY,
and INDUSTRY; If ALL the Assertions in the
Petition are, or are not, true;—Particularly whe-
ther he can, or cannot raise any, and what Part,
of the Money required to obtain his Liberty.

Be pleased to write your opinion relative to each
head of enquiry FULLY on the back of this Letter
and return it by the Penny-Post, with the Petition
inclosed, and directed.

To be put into the LETTER-BOX, No. 7, in
CRAVEN-STREET, STRAND.

E

If

If the Petitioner's Character is approved by the Committee, the following Notice is sent to the Petitioner.

Send this to your PLAINTIFF immediately.

Society for the Discharge and Relief of Persons imprisoned for Small Debts.

CAVEN-STREET, Strand, the 177
a Prisoner
in the *at your suit for a Debt*
of £ s. d. hath petitioned this SOCIETY
for their charitable Assistance, and being found in
great Distress, the SOCIETY have

RESOLVED,

To offer a Composition for the Debt; therefore, if you will exonerate the Prisoner, and deliver up all Notes or other Obligations, subsisting between you, be pleased to be at the Lodge of the said Prison

On *next, at*

o' Clock precisely,

when you may receive such Composition, and the Prisoner be immediately restored to his Liberty, Occupation, and Family.

The Composition being accepted, the Gaol Fees are immediately paid, and the Debtor set at Liberty, with some little Donation according

cording to the Number and Distress of his Family.

And in order to prevent imposition by SWINDLERS, the Society have found it sometimes necessary to apply to the Plaintiff for his Testimony, concerning the Debtor, by the following Letter.

SOCIETY for the Discharge and Relief of Persons imprisoned for SMALL DEBTS.

CRAVEN-STREET, STRAND.

the . . . of 177

a Prisoner at your suit in the Gaol of . . . for a Debt of £. s. d. hath petitioned this Society for their charitable assistance; who, being desirous of distributing the benevolence of the Public to every worthy object (and to them only) request to be informed by you of the manner in which the Debt was contracted: Whether in the common and ordinary course of Business, or by specious Pretences; and of such other circumstances as may enable the society to judge of the Petitioner's true character, and of his qualification to partake of the public bounty from this charity.

Be pleased to write your Answer on the back of this Paper—and direct it

To be put into the Letter Box, No. 7, Craven-Street, Strand.

FORM of BEQUESTS, or LEGACIES.

I A. B. do give and bequeath unto *The TREASURER of the SOCIETY for the DISCHARGE and RELIEF of Persons imprisoned for Small Debts*, the Sum of *to be paid out of my personal Estate*, to be by him applied, (with the Consent of the Governors thereof) for the sole Uses and Purposes of that humane Institution.

N.B. Any *Legacy* arising from *Lands*, is void by the *Statute of Mortmain*.

LEGACIES Received.

Lady Osborne	—	208	0	0
Mr. Daniel Remy	—	100	0	0
Mrs. Henrietta Maria Tomlinson	405	0	0	
John Cale, Esq;	—	200	0	0
A Lady	—	50	0	0
Mr. John Bispham	—	50	0	0
Mr. Robert Clee	—	50	0	0
		1063	0	0

The

THE rules and orders of the Society and the forms for carrying the benevolent designs of the public into effectual execution, have been honored by the general approbation and encouragement of all ranks of people among us, inasmuch, that some of the public city companies, executors, and other trustees for distributing annual sums of money for discharge of poor debtors, have made the Society their *Almoners*, under a full conviction that the Society, from the experience they have acquired, do discharge as many Debtors, for ONE hundred pounds, as they can discharge for TWO hundred pounds; notwithstanding the Society are at all times ready to act according to the *general* directions of such trustees, and to render to them accurate lists of the Debtors discharged, with the money so intrusted to their distribution.

TIME, which affects the various vicissitudes in human life, has also made some changes in the Society; but hu-

manity—Philanthropy—and Christianity are still the same; so that tho' some of the NOBLE, the GREAT, and the GOOD, have been removed, others have become the friends of the distressed Debtor in their stead;—the present officers of the Society are

The Rt. Hon. Ld. ROMNEY, President,
 The Rt. Hon. Earl of SHIP- }
 BROOK,
 The Rt. Hon. Lord Visc. }
 BEAUCHAMP,
 The Hon. Mr. Justice }
 NARES, }
 EDWARD WHEELER, Esq. }
 The Hon. Sir SIDNEY ME- }
 DOWS, }
 Mr. NEILD, Treasurer,
 Mr. NELME, Secretary. }
 Vice
 Presidents,

The Committee are composed of such annual benefactors as choose to attend.

They meet every other Wednesday (at their own Expence) to transact the business of this Society; which business being

being now reduced to a regular system, does not require a more frequent attendance.

N. B. Persons desirous of establishing similar societies in other parts of the kingdom, may have, *Gratis*, copies of the modes of business the Society have adopted—and if they find any deficiency or defect therein, the Society will be thankful for their information and advice.

80 *Account of the Society for the Relief*

EXHORTATION
TO THE
DEBTOR RELEASED,
BY THE
SOCIETY
FOR THE
DISCHARGE AND RELIEF
OF
PERSONS imprisoned for SMALL DDBTS.

MY FRIEND.

HAPPY in a deliverance from the miseries of a jail, through the *goodness of God*, and the *charity of your fellow creatures*, you cannot be insensible that it is your duty to BE THANKFUL.

Your

Your first, and most grateful thanks are due to GOD, your creator, redeemer and preserver, whose good providence is over all his creatures: and, in full proof of it, he hath not suffered you to languish in melancholy confinement; but regarding your distress with a fatherly eye, hath rescued you from it, through means wholly unexpected and unmerited by you.

Offer up, therefore, to this great and gracious author of your deliverance, the earnest and unfeigned thanksgiving of your heart. Cry out with the Psalmist, *What shall I render unto the Lord, for all the benefits that he hath done unto me? I will offer unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord**. Consider how easy to yourself this tribute of praise and gratitude is, while it is of all others the most acceptable to God, as being some proof of a sincere

* Psalm cxvi. 11, 15.

and honest heart. And at the same time recollect, that a deficiency in it, will not only shew you unworthy of past, but may justly deprive you of future favours from God. It is therefore no less your duty than your interest, *to be thankful.*

Gratitude to God is the well-spring and fountain-head, as it were, of every other virtue. They who excel in it, can never be deficient in gratitude to their *earthly benefactors.*

It is to them under the Divine Providence, that you owe all your present views of future happy life. They, moved by a generous commiseration of your distresses, have discharged your Debts, have opened to you the prison gates, and given you again that, which is of all things most desirable to human creatures—the enjoyment of **LIBERTY** ! Perfectly disinterested as their Charity is towards you, you cannot fail to hold it in the highest estimation ; you cannot fail to offer up your fervent and constant Prayers for the humane

humane Imparters of it: and to shew yourself worthy of their pity, and their bounty, and by seriously reflecting on the proper means to improve the happiness which they have communicated.

To this end, after having offered up your earnest *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings* to God, and implored his blessing on your *Benefactors*, intreat HIM to enlighten your mind, while in serious thought you ~~RE-~~ FLECT (with a determined purpose to act agreeably to those reflections) on the *CAUSES* which deprived you of liberty, and lodged you within the mournful walls of a prison.

If those *CAUSES* were evil, if vice and Folly, Extravagance and Dissipation wrought your overthrow, and involved you in those debts which the humanity of your country has so generously discharged; remember that the same *causes* will always produce the same *effects*: and that if abusing the present providential mercy, you indulge in and pursue your former vices, distresses more fatal

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than before will most certainly ensue. For that humanity which before relieved, will then be averted from you, and no more open her liberal hand to relieve.* You will return to, and perhaps perish in confinement, deservedly unpitied ; the miseries of that state horribly aggravated to you by the consciousness of your past folly, ingratitude and vice. Our Saviour's counsel, therefore, to the Paralytic whom he restored to health, may with great force and propriety be applied to you ; *Behold, thou art made whole : Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*||—“ Behold thou art made free ; delivered from Debt, from Prison, and from Sorrow :— *Sin no more ;* but seriously repent and

* N. B. By the Rules and Orders of the Society, it is expressly enjoined, “ That no person be delivered a *second* time, unless it shall appear to the Committee that their *second* misfortune cannot be imputed to their own fault.” Rule VIII. No. 5. p. 68.

|| John v. ver. 14.

reform thy life: otherwise, the vices which wrought thy past sorrow will plunge thee into sorrows much more fatal and severe!

But, if you are happy enough to be able to lay your hand upon your heart, and to appeal, in this solemn review of your actions, to the searcher of all secrets, that no flagrant sins or vices of yours have been the immediate cause of your misfortunes; but that they have arisen from *imprudences* perhaps, from ignorance and unskilfulness; from a want of experience, or the common and unforeseen casualties and occurrences of Life:—In this case, though you may have much greater cause of self-satisfaction than in the former, yet there will not be less need that you frame your future plan of conduct, as much as possible, on the principles of prudent *care* and deliberate circumspection. Especially, you must study to improve and grow wary from your past mistakes and inadvertencies;

and

and determine to act, under a constant sense of God's immediate presence and directing Providence, with all caution, advice and consideration. Ever willing to take and to hear counsel, and to use such discretion in the management of yourself and your concerns, that, amidst any of the changes and chances of life, you may at least have the satisfaction to look up to God, and appeal to Men, as having faithfully, honestly, industriously, and to the best of your abilities and understanding, done your utmost.

For this purpose you must be particularly careful of your future behaviour and conduct in life; settling it well in your mind, and endeavouring, not only to avoid all that civil, which was in any respect prejudicial, but to practice those Virtues you have neglected, especially the strictest SOBRIETY, without which the others will be impracticable.

We

We must not, however, omit to mention, and to recommend, in an especial manner, the exertion and constant exercise of another virtue, which you peculiarly owe to the public, to your benefactors, and to yourself; and that is INDUSTRY: Without which, as you will shew yourself utterly unworthy the mercy you have now received, so will you entirely defeat the great end at which we aim; namely, “The restoring *industrious*, and consequently *useful* Members to the community.”—To that community you owe the utmost exertion of your industry, without which you will be a burden to the state and to yourself. Sloth will *clothe you with rags* *; INDUSTRY will bring you competence and sufficiency, if not wealth. It will procure you the favor of God and of man; and is that alone which can thoroughly rescue

* Prov. xxviii. 21.

you from the difficulties of your past situation, and reinstate you in full happiness and peace. Indeed, it is a most pleasing reflection, that we seldom see a man truly *industrious*, and honestly busying himself in his proper occupation, but success attends him; or if not success, yet at least the esteem and assistance of his fellow-creatures. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich* *, but *the slothful shall come under tribute*.† *The soul of the sluggard defireth and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat* ‡. *He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour!* and *men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself* §.

We heartily wish you may verify these remarks, and admonished by your late misfortunes, not only redeem the errors of the past, but by your honest industry

* Prov. x. 4. † Ibid. xii. 24. ‡ Ibid. xiii. 4.
|| Ibid. xi. 27. § Psalm xlix. 18.

for

for the time to come, obtain a blessing from the rich Providence of that God, who crowneth the industrious *with a good reward*, and enableth them to *rejoice in the labour of their hands*.

In this view, let us particularly impress it upon your mind, that as you owe all your hopes of increase, under God, to that Charity which hath thus given you *Liberty*, as the first of blessings; so it is your immediate Duty, and will we trust not only be your happiness, but your fixed Purpose, to contribute what you can with justice and propriety, toward the assistance of the good work. Should the Providence of God succeed and prosper your well-meant endeavours in the paths of Industry and Virtue, how pleasing, how delightful must it be to your heart, to make a grateful return to your Benefactors!—whose hands will be open to receive from *you*, the more largely to pour

pour out Liberty, and Comfort to fellow-creatures.

On this noble principle, then, remember to be *merciful after thy power*, should the God of goodness give thee power to get wealth. *If thou hast much, give plenteously: if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little*; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased *. And, indeed, if you consider, it is not only natural, but just and reasonable to expect this pleasing return, in acknowledgment for those benefits of which you have partaken; to which you owe in Gratitude and Justice so much; and from which, if liberally encouraged and promoted, by feeling hearts, you should reflect, that many other worthy, but unsuccessful men in future, may by God's blessing reap as great comforts and advantages as you yourself have done. *Be you therefore merciful, even as God and man have*

* Tob. iv. 8. Heb. xiii. 16.

been

been kind and merciful to you : Merciful to all; and particularly so to such as shall happen by any means to become your Debtors : ever remember that strong and emphatic application of the great Creditor in the Gospel, *Shouldest not thou also have compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?**

But further remember, that all charitable Gifts, as well as all moral Actions, should have a nobler source, and aim at higher views, than this world and its transitory concerns.

As you are admonished to begin with, so must you continually look up to God, not only as your great Deliverer, but as your perpetual Guardian, Benefactor and Friend; as your kind Preserver, Protector, and Father. To HIM, as the *End*, must you direct all your actions; Religion must be the grand spring and mo-

* Read the whole parable, Matth. chap. xiii. ver. 23, &c.

tive of all you do : For, be well assured, that unless you square your *conduct* and direct your *Life* by God's unerring laws, you will neither proceed with regularity in the *one*, nor with Success and Peace in the *other*.

Resolve, therefore, above all things, to form your future life upon a strictly religious plan. Make that **GOSPEL**—which is fraught with the noblest consolation to minds in every distress and every condition,—your study, your delight, and your practice ; and intreat your great Redeemer, who came *to preach Deliverance to the Captives*, that he would open your eyes both to *see* and *know*, as well as to *fulfil* his blessed Precepts, which afford at once perfect freedom to the mind, and pure felicity to the life.

We wish you most seriously **to reflect**, that as the same motives of mere disinterested good-will, which incited us to discharge your Debts, and deliver you from prison, do incite us likewise to dis-

miss

miss you with this friendly Counsel ; so you cannot fail to receive and to fulfil it, if you would not draw down upon you the most odious character of Ingratitude, Ignorance, and Self-delusion. We have not, we cannot have any other end in thus advising you, than a single wish to your future welfare ; even *that it may be well with you and with your children for ever** ! We would extend that wish beyond our temporal Relief, beyond the present world. We would earnestly desire that our humble endeavours for your worldly good, may by God's grace be effectual to produce your spiritual, your eternal welfare.

To this end, we have exhorted you, To exercise a devout and amiable *thankfulness*.

1. To God your supreme Benefactor :
2. To your *Fellow-creatures*, whom he hath happily made the instruments of his mercy towards you.

* *Deuteronomy, chap. v. ver. 29.*

We have exhorted you—

—To serious *Consideration* on your past state and conduct—To thorough *Repentance* and intire *Reformation*, where that conduct was evil:—To *Prudence* and wise *Amendment* where it was wrong.

—To *Diligence, Honesty, and Activity* in your sphere.

—To a grateful *remembrance of this charity*, if providentially successful in your future industrious efforts. And above all,

To a strictly *Religious Life*, formed upon that divine and ever-glorious Rule of Faith and Practice, delivered by Jesus Christ in the *Gospel*.

And thus, my Friend, we bid you affectionately farewell; earnestly intreating the God of mercy to second these our well-meant *Instructions*, and to carry them to your *Heart*.

THE

T H E
DEBTOR's THANKSGIVING

For Deliverance out of Prison.

GRACIOUS and all-merciful Lord God ! who hearest the cries of the poor destitute, and despisest not the prisoners ; who art rich in compassion and love to all such as call upon thee ; accept, I beseech thee, O Father, the adoration, thanksgiving, and praise, of a most grateful heart. I was in prison, O God, and thou didst come unto me, in the pity and compassion of my fellow-creatures, the works of thy hands, and the ministers of thy providential relief. Thou hast heard me, when I cried unto thee in my trouble. Thou hast saved me from my deep distress, when I was bound in the cords of affliction. Thou hast raised me up friends to commiserate and to help me. With joy and gratitude I see that the

snare

snare is broken, and I am delivered. Thou, Lord, hast brought me out of prison; thy hand is visible and well seen in my late deliverance; and therefore my soul shall give thanks unto thy name.

May I never overlook this thy goodness, O my God! Never suffer me to forget the vows and prayers which I made to thee in my distress; but let my whole future life be one acceptable sacrifice to thee, my great deliverer! and do thou make all my future conduct to shew forth thy praise. May my past misfortunes teach me prudence in my worldly affairs, and convince me of the necessity of care and diligence, of fidelity and honesty in all my dealings; that so I may never, by any extravagance or wilful indiscretion, bring myself or others into the same misfortunes, lest a worse thing come upon me!

May my late imprisonment and extreme affliction teach me pity, and inspire my heart with kindness towards all who are

are in prison and afflicted; and particularly may thy blessing crown the endeavours, and reward the zealous labours of those, whom thou hast made the means of deliverance, and the dispensers of my present comfort.

If at any time I have abused the liberty I formerly enjoyed, pardon me, I entreat thee! Thou God of Mercy! and now at length, enable me to be a good steward of my bodily freedom, and to improve those happy opportunities, which are again, by thy mercy, put into my hands. As thou hast enlarged my body, do thou also more than ever enlarge my spirit, in fervent prayers for thy divine grace and guidance; in constant thanksgiving for the great benefits I have so unexpectedly received. And grant that I may evermore proclaim thy unmerited goodness, not only by my lips, but in my life. That so, delivered from the oppression of man here, I may finally be delivered from

F the

the condemnation of thy law hereafter,
and ever be redeemed at the great day
of judgment, to the glory {of thy holy
name, through the merits of thy Son
Jesu Christ, my blessed Lord and Sa-
viour. *Amen.*

THE

T H E
DEBTOR RELIEVED:

S K E T C H O F A
S A C R E D O D E,

Set to MUSIC by Mr. HOOK:

R E C I T A T I V E.

OH LET THE SORROWFUL SIGHING OF THE
PRISONERS COME BEFORE THEE.

A I R.

SEE where he lies
Neglected and forlorn !

From his dear wife and tender infants torn,
Feeding on bitter tears and deep-drawn sighs :
The Husband, Father, and the Man.

R E C I T A T I V E.

See where he lies ; dejected, pale, and wan !
Immur'd within the doleful Prison's Wall,
Depriv'd of every Good, Men valuable call ;

A I R.

SUN, that from thy golden height,
Scatter'st Glory and Delight ;

Beams that laughing Nature bless
With universal chearfulness;—

R E C I T A T I V E.

Ah, glorious Sun ! for him in vain you glow ;
Blank, blank the Prospect all :
'Tis Dreariness and Woe !

A I R.

Spirit of celestial Birth,
" Mountain Nymph, Sweet LIBERTY !
Noblest Boon of Heaven to Earth,
Oh how good to dwell with thee ;
How delectable to rove,
O'er the Upland, through the Grove,
Unrestrain'd in Bliss with thee,
" Mountain Nymph, Sweet LIBERTY ;"
Strike, strike the solemn Chord : And weep
to view
A free-born MAN—a BRITON too,
Of Freedom take his deep-ton'd sad Adieu !

A I R.

Thou, cruel CREDITOR, forbear,—
Can'st thou have more than All ?
Enough, enough :—The MAN in mercy spare ;
Ah, why his Limbs enthrall ?
From his humble Home so dear,
Oh, for Mercy, do not tear !

See

of Persons confined for Small Debts. 101

See his Wife in Sorrow drown'd,
View his Infants weeping round :
From Industry his Hands restrain !
Merciless !—what can't thou gain !

R E C I T A T I V E.

Shame—reproach of conscience—for thy Part :
While Hunger gnaws their Soul, and An-
guish rends the Heart !

A I R.

But see—with melting Pity in her Eye,
Man's genial Friend, blest CHARITY,
Religion's eldest, loveliest Child,
Led by her Parent meek and mild,
Their Anguish views !
“ Ah, who she cried, could Help refuse ?
Though Law it's Rigour will not bend,
Nor stern Necessity relent ;
In Pity to their Sufferings sent,
We will Mercy's Arm extend ;
We my Sons, will help bestow.”

R E C I T A T I V E.

Thus as she spoke, a generous Glow
Of her own Flame she did impart
To many a noble, many a feeling Heart !
They caught the Fire, and as it spread,
The DEBTOR felt the Warmth, and rear'd
his down-cast Head.

A I R.

Then "Welcome, thrice welcome"—I heard
his full Voice,
In Gratitude's deep Diapason rejoice :
" Oh welcome, blest Freedom, to Mortals
most dear,
Lov'd Light of the Sun, balmy Sweetness of
Air !

R E C I T A T I V E.

Come my Wife, my Children join,
Raise the Song to Strains divine.

S E M I - C H O R U S.

Glorious GOD, the first to THEE,
We lift the heart, we bow the Knee,

R E C I T A T I V E.

For thou hast heard our Plaints, and SET THE
PRISONER FREE !

L A S T C H O R U S.

Sons of Mercy, Sons of Heaven,
Next to THEM, our Thanks be given.

Louder still exalt the Strain,
These are Patriots, these are Men !

Ministring Angels may they be,
Where all are blest—there all are FREE !

E P I.

E P I L O G U E,

W R I T T E N B Y

R. C U M B E R L A N D. Esq.

And spoken by Mr. HULL and Mrs MATTOCKS, at Covent-Garden Theatre, after the Jealous Wife, performed for the Use of the Society for the Discharge of Persons imprisoned for small Debts.

The Curtain rises, and discovers a Prison; at some Distance a Woman poorly habited, and in a disconsolate Attitude; after standing for some Time motionless, in a Posture of fixed Attention, she speaks.

Woman.

T H O U loathsome dungeon, in whose dreary womb
The pining debtor finds a living tomb,
Where 'midst the clank of chains and dismal yells
Of shackled felons my sad husband dwells;
From this dark cell, Oh give him to my view!
Let him look forth, and take a last adieu.

[*As she advances towards the prison, a person in Gentleman's apparel accosts her.*]

Man.

Man.

Stay, child of sorrow, thou whose piercing groans
Might move to pity e'en those senseless stones,
Why dost thou bend thy melancholy way
To that drear dungeon? Child of sorrow, say..

Woman.

Why should I stay, or my sad griefs impart?
Can there be pity in a human heart?
Away and let me die—

Man.

No; if 'tis there
You seek some captive friend, renounce despair;
For, tho' the iron hand of law has barr'd
Those surly doors which yon dread mansion guard,
Know there are found, on whose dilated breasts
The heav'n-descended dove of pity rests,
Souls that delight with fast'ring smiles to cheer
The broken heart, and dry affliction's tear,
Pluck the wan debtor from his noisome den,
And launch him on the cheerful walks of men.

Woman.

If such there be, oh lead me to their sight,
And let me plead a wretched suff'rer's right.
Can there be truth, humanity or sense,
In laws that make misfortune an offence?
Torn from his famish'd babes, and frantic wife,
A father, husband, there must end his life!

While

Stretch'd on his straw the guiltless captive lies,
While round his temples sickly damps arise.
That e'en the murderer's ignominious fate
Were welcome refuge from his hopeless state.
Lost are the hands whose honest labour fed
His helpless innocents with daily bread,
For day by day the busy loom he ply'd,
With soft contentment singing by his side :
Till heaven flung out the signal to destroy,
And dropt the curtain o'er this scene of joy.
Nine tedious weeks the languid patient lay
To dire disease an unresisting prey ;
The tenth succeeded—when alas ! behold
A worse tormenter in a human mould,
A griping creditor ; escape who can,
When man's great foe assumes the shape of man,
Steel'd to their trade, and deaf to all our cries,
Relentless ruffians seize their legal prize ;
From my fond arms a dying husband tear,
And plunge their victim in a dungeon—there.

Man.

Enough ! go speak the healing words of peace
To thy sad mate, and bear him this release.
Tell him the muse which on these scenes attends,
That balsam to his wounded spirit sends ;
And know this truth thyself, 'tis not alone
The preacher's pulpit, and the monarch's throne,

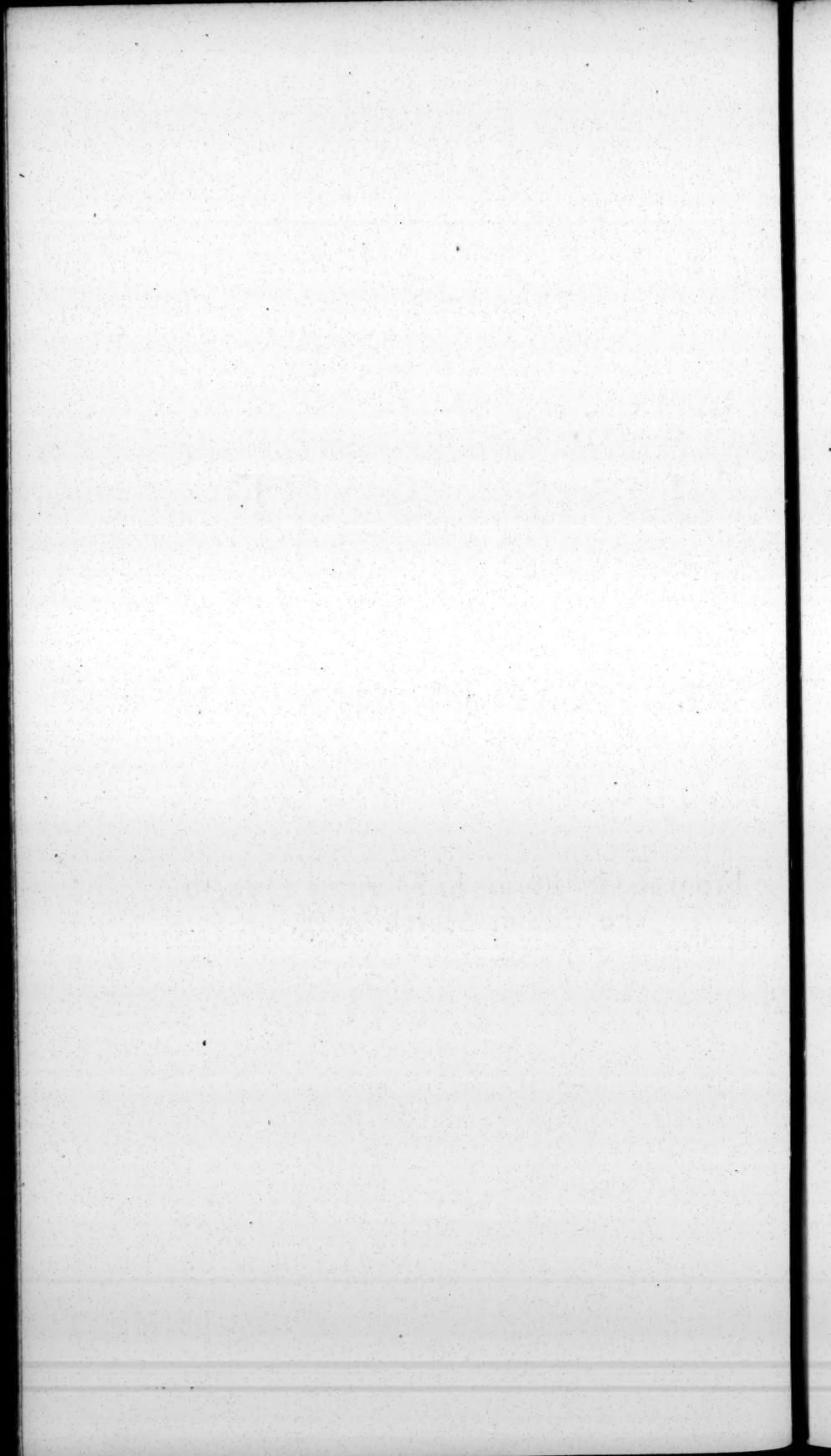
That

That Charity frequents; but in this age
She guides the theatre, and treads the stage:
Lo! she is present, cast your eyes around,
And here in each spectator's heart she's found.

F I N I S.

A
L I S T
OF
GENERAL AND ANNUAL
BENEFAC TIONS.

From the Institution in February 1772, to
the 30th of March 1783.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE Society have observed, that in eleven Years, many Benefactors have adopted the *same* Signature as other Benefactors ; as A B. A C. A D, &c. &c. so that it is not possible for such Benefactors to distinguish the Sums they severally paid ; nor for the Society to distinguish who paid those Sums.

It was therefore proposed and unanimously

Resolved, That all such Sums as have been paid by *unknown* Benefactors under initial Letters only, be printed under the title **ANONYMOUS** ; as

I. All Benefactions *under* two Guineas, to be in one aggregate Sum.

II. All other Benefactions paid under initials from *unknown* Benefactors of or *above* two Guineas, and under 10l. be entered in one aggregate Sum, under the *first* of such initial Letters.

Nevertheless, every Benefactor may at the usual Hours have Recourse to the Society's Minute and Cash Books, to see the Entry of each Benefaction, and the Day it was advertised in the Public Papers.

A
L I S T
OF
GENERAL AND ANNUAL
BENEFACTIONS.

From the Institution in February 1772, to the
30th of March 1783.

N.B. *Those marked with a * are annual Benefactors, Governors, and of the Committee. Those marked (s) have been Stewards.*

A N O N Y M O U S.

	L. s. d.
B ENEFACTIONS from Per- sons unknown whose initials begin with the Letter A. as	
A B. A C. A D. &c.	508 9 5

B.	
B H. B S. B V, &c. &c.	21 9 0

C.	
C B. C D. C M. C W, &c.	112 19 0

D.	
D B. D E. D S. D W, &c.	55 18 6
	E.

BENEFACTIONS.

£. s. d.

E.

E A. E C. E D, &c. 73 12 0

F.

F B, &c. 5 5 0

G.

G D. G G. G P, &c. 46 16 0

H.

H K. H L. H M. &c. 10 10 0

I.

I B. I D. I H, &c. 68 12 0

L.

L D. L W, &c. 11 11 0

M.

M D. M E. M H, &c. 28 10 0

N.

N B. N E. N N, &c. 14 3 6

P.

P P, &c. 5 5 0

R.

R C. R D. R K, &c. 61 19 0

S.

S B. S M. S R, &c. 36 15 0

B 3

T.

BENEFACTIONS.

	L.	s.	d.
	T.		
T A. T D. T R, &c.	33	12	0
	V.		
V V. &c.	5	5	0
	W.		
W C. W M. W W, &c.	60	13	0
Total	1161	9	5

A Friend

BENEFAC TIONS.

f. s. d.

A Friend to Lord Beauchamp (<i>Vice-President</i>) by his Lordship, four benefactions	115	0	0
Mr. William Atwick, sen.	6	6	0
* s. Mr. James Ansell, four benefactions	8	8	0
* Mr. Akerman	13	13	0
* Paul Agutter, Esq; five benefactions	10	10	0
*s. Thomas Adderly, Esq; ten benefactions	22	1	0
* — Allin, Esq; Bath, three benefactions	9	8	0
A. B. by Mr. Nelme	100	0	0
A. B. by Mr. Nelme	10	0	0
* A. B. by Mr. Nelme, two benefactions	20	0	0
* A. Z. three benefactions, by Mr. Nelme	60	0	0
A. B.	20	0	0
Laurence Ashbourne, Esq;	5	5	0
A Nobleman, C. C.	10	10	0
A. B.	10	0	0
A Lady, by the Honourable Capt. Walsingham, <i>deceased</i>	8	8	0
A Person unknown, by W. W.	20	0	0
A Lady, by Messrs. Coutts	5	5	0
A Lady, by Mr. Minchin	5	5	0
A Wager concerning the Fate of Mr. Wilkes's Election to the Mayoralty, intended to have been spent at a Tavern	3	13	6
A Lady unknown, by J. T.	4	4	0
			A. B.

BENEFACTIONS.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
A. B.	10 10 0
A Person in the Country by J. V.	5 5 0
A. T. by Messrs. Dorien	12 12 0
A. W.	5 5 0
Hon. Mr. Justice Aston, <i>deceased</i>	5 5 0
Mr. Stephen Aisley	2 2 0
Mr. Thomas Adam	5 5 0
A. B.	10 10 0
Mr. Cain Adams	4 4 0
A Lady unknown	10 0 0
An Acknowledgement to an Officer of the Navy at Dover	5 5 0
Mrs. A—r	20 0 0
A. B. two benefactions	20 0 0
A Wager between J. P. and T. C.	60 0 0
A. R. three benefactions	15 15 0
A. B.	20 0 0
A. B.	10 0 0
A. by the Rev. Mr. L'Herondoll, <i>deceased</i>	10 0 0
A. B.	10 0 0
A. R.	10 0 0
A. R.	5 5 0
A Collection by Servants in a Fa- mily	4 8 0
A. by J. S.	5 5 0
A Lady—E. H.	10 10 0
A. B.	10 10 0
A. B.	10 0 0
A. B. by Messrs. Biddulph, and Co. 21 benefactions	44 2 0
A Lady, by Hoare and Co.	10 0 0
A Lady, by Mr. Neild	5 5 0
	Mrs. Eliza-

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
Mrs. Elizabeth Ashton	5 5 0
Amed, put into the letter box	3 3 0
Mr. Astley, a benefit at his amphitheatre	20 10 0
A. R. by W. C.	5 5 0
A. D.	21 0 0
Alderman, Deputy and Common-Council of Farringdon within	25 11 0
A Lady, sixth benefaction	50 0 0
A Lady, by the Treasurer	3 3 0
A Lady, by the Rev. Dr. Trotter	5 5 0
A Lady, by the Rev. Mr. Nutt	3 3 0
A Lady unknown, two benefactions	25 0 0
A Lady unknown, three benefactions	30 0 0

B.

* Rt. Hon. Lord Beauchamp, Vice-President, six benefactions	116 5 0
* Earl of Buckinghamshire, two benefactions	41 0 0
* Earl of Bristol	20 0 0
* Earl of Bradalbane	10 10 0
* Francis Bonham, Esq;	100 0 0
*s. Richard Becher, Esq; six benefactions	38 17 0
*s. Theodore H. Broadhead, Esq; ten benefactions	52 10 0
*s. Hon. Ph. Bouverie, nine benefactions	48 7 0
* Nathaniel	

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	£. s. d.
* Nathaniel Brassey, Esq;	21 0 0
* Mr. John Bradney, seven benefactions	14 14 0
* Isaac Hawkins Brown, Esq; nine benefactions	52 10 0
*s. William Bayntun, Esq;	5 5 0
*s. Messrs. Biddulph and Cocks, five benefactions	17 17 0
* John Barnard, Esq; four benefactions	21 0 0
*s. John Boldero, Esq; five benefactions	77 16 8
*s. John Buller, Esq;	10 10 0
John Barber, Esq;	2 2 0
Mr. Samuel Briggs, six benefactions	12 12 0
Hon. Mr. Justice Blackstone, five benefactions, <i>deceased</i>	13 13 0
Laurence Beauchamp, Esq;	2 2 0
Sir Charles Bunbury	10 10 0
The Rev. F. Bacon	3 3 0
Mr. Barker, of Lyndon, Rutlandshire	5 5 0
B. D. R. A.	10 10 0
Miss Boyle, by the Hon. Capt. Walsingham <i>deceased</i>	2 2 0
Mr. Bullock	20 0 0
B. Y.	41 0 0
John Bond, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	5 5 0
Thomas Boddington, Esq;	5 5 0
Mr. Burrell	3 3 0
B. H.	10 10 0
Philip Broke, Esq;	5 5 0
Rev. Nicholas Bacon	5 5 0
	Miss

BENEFACTIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
Miss Brown	2	2	0
Mr. Henry Busby	4	4	0
Mr. John Bromley	8	8	0
Hon. Mrs. Boscowen, four benefac- tions	13	13	0
Mr. Edward Bevan	6	6	0
Buckland Nutcomb Bluett, Esq;	2	2	0
Francis Basset, Esq; two benefac- tions	15	5	0
Rev. Thomas Bentham	3	3	0
Mr. Thomas Brewman	4	4	0
B. C. by the Rev. Mr. Harrison	4	4	0
Hon. Charlotte Bouverie	1	1	0
Rev. Mr. Baynes of Stonham Aspall	3	3	0
B. S.	10	0	0
B. and C. three benefactions	6	6	0
Mr. Bowles for the Marshalsea	2	2	0
B. V.	5	5	0

C.

Collections at sundry Churches, &c. viz.

	£.	s.	d.
1772 { Charlotte Street and Bedford Chapels	8	1	0
Charlotte Street Chapel	3	9	0
1773 { St. Mary, Somerset	8	3	0
Queen Street Chapel	36	13	7
1774—St. Saviour's and St. John's	134	19	0
			1775

BENEFACTIONS.

		<i>l. s. d.</i>
1775	The Rev. Mr. Herries's Meeting in the Old Jewry	38 3 6
	St. Paul's, Covent-Garden	18 0 0
	St. Mary, Whitechapel	21 7 0
	Brompton Chapel	28 13 0
	St. George's, Hanover Square	82 17 5
1776	St. George's, Southwark	25 9 1
	Greenwich Church	83 5 0
	St. James's Church	38 14 0
	Hampstead Church	72 16 6
	Richmond Church	102 3 9
1777	St. Bride's	19 1 4
	Hackney Church	63 13 3
	Tavistock Chapel	31 10 0
	St. George's Hanover Square	39 7 9
	Clapham Church	47 18 7
1778	Kingston Church	25 10 7
	Edmonton Church	29 10 0
	Twickenham Church	39 14 2
	Islington Church	51 10 3
	St. Margaret's, Westminster	88 2 2
	Kensington Church	73 12 0
	Hammersmith Church	24 8 3
	Low Layton Church	22 18 6
	Tottenham Church	21 1 0
	Newington Church, Surry	17 10 8
	St. Giles's in the Fields	14 5 7
	Northampton Chapel	56 12 5
	Charlotte Street Chapel	48 7 9

1779

BENEFACTIONS.

		£.	s.	d.
	Salter's Hall Meeting	47	1	0
	Chelsea Church	21	0	0
	Churchwardens of St Mildred			
	Poultry	40	0	0
1779	South Audley Chapel	88	4	6
	St. Andrew, Holborn	23	13	6
	Isleworth	23	10	9
	St. Peter's, Cornhill	14	12	8
	St. Clement Danes	19	10	2
1780	Lambeth Church	56	0	0
	Putney Church	26	12	1
1781	St. Martin and St. Philip, Birmingham	88	8	0
1782	Camberwell Church	40	15	0
	Peterham Church	16	6	4

C

* The

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
* The Most Rev. Dr. Cornwallis Archbishop of Canterbury, <i>deceased</i>	30 0 0
*s. Lord Craven	20 0 0
* Mr. Conyers, four benefactions	8 8 0
* Mr. Henry Carter, three benefac- tions	6 6 0
* Lady Frances Coningsby, two be- nefactions	21 0 0
*s. George Colman, Esq; three be- nefactions	35 15 0
*s. Rev. John Craven, four bene- factions	11 11 0
* Mrs. Cripps, at Bath	21 0 0
* Mr. Crawley, four benefactions	8 8 0
* Mrs. Ann Cotesworth	20 0 0
* Mr. De Champ	21 0 0
C. E.	10 0 0
Mrs. C. M.	5 5 0
C. D.	10 0 0
Lady Edward Clive	2 2 0
Lady Clayton	2 2 0
C. E.	10 0 0
Mr. B. Conquest, Birmingham	2 2 0
Mr. Rowland Conyers, three bene- factions	6 6 0
Mr. Noah Clye, nine benefactions	18 18 0
John Crewe, Esq; of Boleworth, Cheshire	5 5 0
C. T.	10 10 0
Francis Casyl, Esq; two benefactions	4 4 0
Char. San.	5 5 0
Rev. Dr. Cockayne	2 2 0
	Rev.

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
Rev. Philip Cocks, two benefactions	2 2 0
C. C.	50 0 0
Mrs. C. Feb. 4.	2 2 0
Clio, by Mr. Clark, three benefac- tions	6 6 0
John Campbell, Esq;	5 5 0
Mrs. Clutterbuck, at Bath	10 10 0
C. M. various benefactions	31 10 0
Charles Cotton, Esq;	3 3 0

D.

* His Grace the Duke of Devonshire	10 10 0
* Her Grace the Dutches of Devon- shire	10 0 0
John Delme, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	36 16 0
*s. John Darker, Esq; eleven bene- factions	57 15 0
* Deborah (a Lady) four benefac- tions	105 0 0
Lady D'aeth, two benefactions	4 4 0
* Josiah Dornford, Esq; two bene- factions	4 4 0
* Hon. Baron Dimsdale, six benefac- tions	28 18 0
* Mr. Thomas Dawes, five bene- factions	10 10 0
Mrs. Ann Dean, of Bath, four bene- factions	29 15 0
D. D. by Mr. Nelme	200 0 0
Mr. Benjamin Dorsett, <i>deceased</i>	2 2 0
Peter Du Cane, Esq;	5 5 0

BENEFACTIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
Mrs. Dawson	5	5	0
Sir William Desse	2	2	0
Mr. Francis Davis	2	2	0
Mr. Richard Dixon	2	14	6
D. G.	10	10	0
— Dehaney, Esq;	4	5	0
Rev. Dr. Dukin, three benefactions	6	6	0
Mr. Du Bellamy	7	7	0
Sir Peter Denis, <i>deceased</i>	5	5	0
Christopher Dawson, Esq;	7	7	0

E.

E. I, Esq; — St. Thomas's	80	0	0
Lady Edmonston, four benefactions	8	8	0
E. Y. A Lady	10	10	0
E. F. G. by Dr. Smallbrook	2	2	0
E. R. C.	5	5	0
* — Eyles, Esq;	2	2	0
*s. Charles Eyre, Esq; six benefac- tions	13	13	0

F.

* Lord Viscount Folkestone, two
benefactions

10 10 0
* William

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
* William Fuller, Esq; nine benefactions	18 18 0
* Mr. William Faden, jun. six benefactions	12 12 0
* F. T. five benefactions	10 10 0
Lady Mary Fitzgerald, two benefactions	10 10 0
F. R. S. <i>deceased</i>	52 10 0
T. E. Freeman, Esq;	5 5 0
Thomas Fairfax, Esq; of Tadcaster, three benefactions	13 3 0
The Stewards of the late grand Feast of Free and Accepted Masons, being the Balance of the Treasurer's Accounts	4 4 0
Hon. Mrs. F.	20 0 0
Walter Fletcher, Esq; two benefactions	10 10 0
John Forster, Esq; three benefactions	15 15 0
Raphael Franco, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	3 3 0
Mr. Charles Funter, <i>deceased</i>	4 4 0
Mr. Charles Fourdrinier	4 4 0
F. B.	10 0 0
Flory Aubrey, Esq;	21 0 0

G.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Godolphin, by Mr. Hughes, *deceased* 100 0 0
 D 3 * The

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	<i>L. s. d.</i>
* The Right Honourable the Earl of Guildford, nine benefactions	94 10 0
* Sir John Griffin Griffin, Bart.	20 0 0
* Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart. three benefactions	55 5 0
* Lady Dowager Frances Gallo-way, five benefactions	21 0 0
* Mr. Richard Grasswell, four benefactions	8 8 0
William Gardiner, Esq; <i>deceased</i> ..	84 0 0
James Gladell, Esq;	2 2 0
Mrs. Hester Greville	3 3 0
Lady Griffin	2 2 0
Robert Gosling, Esq;	2 2 0
Grand Jury for the City and Liberty of Westminster	5 5 0
G. E. by Mr. Neild	3 3 0
Mr. Greville	3 3 0
Lady G.	5 5 0
G. I. T. three benefactions	13 13 0
Mrs. Gardiner	5 5 0
G. R. by M. Nelme	20 0 0
Mr. Jonathan Goff, eight benefactions	8 8 0
William Greenwood, Esq;	4 4 0
Mrs. Mary Goff, nine benefactions	7 7 0
Mr. Goolding	2 2 0
G. K.	5 5 0
Gentleman unknown, by Treasurer	2 2 0

* The

BENEFACTIONS.

H.

	£. s. d.
*s. The Right Hon. Earl of Hert- ford, four benefactions	90 0 0
* Earl Hardwicke, six benefactions	80 10 0
* Heny Hoare, Esq; and Co.	21 0 0
* J. Zephaniah Holwell, Esq;	50 0 0
*s. Sir Robert Hamilton, nine bene- factions	18 18 0
*s. Richard Heighway, Esq; eight benefactions	47 5 0
* John Howard, Esq;	21 0 0
* Lady Hamilton five benefactions	12 12 0
* Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esq; eight benefactions	65 15 0
* Mr. John Henderson, four bene- factions	8 8 0
* Mr. William Hill, six benefac- tions	12 12 0
* Mr. Thomas Hull, seven benefac- tions	14 14 0
* Mr. John Haines, eight benefac- tions	16 16 0
Mrs. Marianna Hayes, seven bene- factions	8 8 0
James Haughton, Esq;	10 10 0
Henry Hawley, Esq; two benefac- tions	10 10 0
Miss Hockley	5 5 0
H. H. Junior	5 5 0
	Isaac

BENEFACTIONS.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
Isaac Hawkins, Esq; five benefactions	50 0 0
H. R.	10 10 0
H. A.	10 0 0
H. M.	20 0 0
Dr. Hill, <i>deceased</i>	2 2 0
Mr. Lowen Hoad, two benefactions	4 4 0
Rev. Mr. Hankey,	2 2 0
Peter Hodgson, Esq;	5 5 0
Dr. Hawley	10 10 0
Rev. Mr. Holcombe, two benefactions	4 4 0
H. N. C. T.	5 5 0
Alexander Hume, Esq;	2 2 0
William Higginson, Esq; four benefactions	8 8 0
Edmund Higginson, Esq;	2 2 0
Richard Holt, Esq;	5 5 0
Mr. Higden	2 2 0
Miss Bet. Hatsell, six benefactions	6 6 0
Mrs. Margaret Hayes	2 2 0
Mr. Christopher James Hayes, two benefactions	4 4 0
Capt. Hooper	2 2 0
Mr. Thomas Heathcote	2 2 0
Miss Heathcote	2 2 0
Thomas Heyward, Esq; two benefactions	2 2 0
Mr. Hiorne	1 1 0
H. I. K. by Dr. Smallwood	5 5 0
Mr. Heyward of Wetherington	1 1 0
Mrs. H.	2 2 0
Mr. Holden, Birmingham	10 10 0
	H. L.

BENEFACTIONS.

	<i>L. s. d.</i>
H. L. two benefactions	7 7 0
* Rev. Mr. Hughes	4 4 0

I.

I. B. by Mr. Nelme	100 0 0
Mr. Jordan	9 9 0
I. G. L. by Mr. Neild	10 0 0
I. B. three benefactions	9 9 0
I. M. Esq; by Mr. Nelme, <i>deceased</i>	2 2 0
Mrs. Jebb	2 2 0
Henry Johnson, Esq;	2 2 0
I. B. M. four benefactions, by Dor- rien and Co.	21 0 0
Mr. Joseph Jukes	2 2 0
I. D. from the country	4 4 0
Rev. Dr. Ibbetson	2 2 0
I. G. by Robert Child, Esq;	20 0 0
I. A. W. four benefactions	9 9 0
I. P.	20 0 0
I. left at Craven street, <i>deceased</i>	10 0 0
I. D. of L. H. two benefactions	10 0 0
I. S. Hampstead, two benefactions ..	6 6 0
I. W. S. L.	5 5 0
Sir William Jones	5 5 0
I. W. three benefactions	15 15 0
I. G. Esq; three benefactions	5 5 0
I. F. B. four benefactions	21 0 0
	1. E.

BENEFAC TIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
I. E. Esq; two benefactions	6	6	0
I. B. a Balance received of I. C.	4	0	1
I. G.	5	5	0
I. B. M. two benefactions	10	10	0
I. Th. by C. M.	2	2	0
I. G. by Dorrien and Co.	5	5	0
I. L.	10	0	0
I. L. C.	3	3	0
I. G. by the Treasurer	10	0	0
I. H. Esq; by ditto	2	2	0
J. G. L. by ditto	10	0	0
Henry Jacomb, Esq;	2	2	0

K.

*s. Right Hon. Lord King, five be- factions	50	10	0
* Right Hon. Lord Kinsborough	10	0	0
Richard Kelsall, Esq;	3	3	0
Mr. Alexander Kilgour, <i>deceased</i>	4	4	0
K. C.	5	5	0
Rev. John Knightley	2	2	0
K. H.	2	2	0
Gustav. Adolphus Kempenfelt, Esq;	20	0	0
K. L.	10	0	0

Legacies

BENEFACTIONS.

L. s. d.

L.

Legacies received.

Lady Osborne	208	0	0
Mr. Daniel Remy	100	0	0
Mrs. Henrietta Maria Tomlinson	405	0	0
John Cale, Esq;	200	0	0
A Lady	50	0	0
Mr. John Bispham	50	0	0
Mr. Robert Clee	50	0	0
Mrs. Mary Bourne	100	0	0
Lady Catherine Noel	10	0	0
William Congreve, Esq;	1000	0	0
Mrs. Mary Wylde, by Francis Bowdler, Esq;	100	0	0
Executors of Mrs. Eliz. Cumyns, by the Rev. Dr. Markham, to be applied solely to the Gaol at Whitechapel	100	0	0
Thomas Gardner, Esq; late of Hampstead—A part of the re- mainder of effects left to twelve Charities ; which, depending upon contingencies, cannot be yet ascertained	2373	0	0
The Rev. William Scott, late of Ipswich, has given the re- mainder of his effects to this Society by will, proved the 18th of August, 1778 ; the execu- tors cannot ascertain the value or the time of payment			

The

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
The Right Rev. Dr. Terrick, late Bishop of London, three benefactions	30 10 0
The Right Rev. Dr. Lowth, Bishop of London	10 0 0
The Right Rev. Bishop of Landaff	5 5 0
The Right Rev. Bishop of Lincoln	5 5 0
Peter Leheup, jun. Esq; deceased	100 0 0
Miss Lockart	2 2 0
*s. London Exchange Banking Company, St. James's-street, eight benefactions	52 15 0
* Stephen Lushington, Esq;	5 5 0
L. B. deceased, six benefactions, by Mr. Nelme	30 10 0
* Mr. James Lowe	4 4 0
The old Club at Le Tellieurs, in Halfmoon-street, Piccadilly	22 1 0
L. M.	10 10 0
L. I. C.	10 10 0
Lazzaroni Club, at the Thatched-House Tavern, by their President, T. G. Fothergill, Esq; London Coffee-house	37 16 6
L. A. R.	13 19 0
Messrs. Lowry, Newton	20 0 0
Baker John Littlehales, Esq;	9 9 0
Mr. James Lock	2 2 0
L. P. three benefactions	2 2 0
Mr. Alexander Lean	6 6 0
Mrs. Leigh, four benefactions	8 8 0
Miss Lewis, three benefactions	8 8 0
L. B. by Mr. Willis	6 6 0
	5 5 0
	Lodge

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
Lodge of Cousins, Fleet-street	5 9 6
Mrs. Jane L.	15 15 0
Mrs. Leheup	50 0 0
Mr. Levy	5 5 0
Lady L. W.	10 10 0
Lady H. W.	10 10 0
Lady M. W.	10 10 0
L. M. by Treasurer	3 3 0
L. W.	9 9 0

M.

* M. W. a Lady, by Lord Romney	100	0	0
* s. Sir Sydney Medows, seven benefactions	350	0	0
* Lord Maynard	21	0	0
* s. Hon. Charles Marsham, eight benefactions	35	14	0
* James Martin, Esq;	5	5	0
* s. Joshua Mauger, Esq; two benefactions	5	5	0
* Henry Major, Esq;	2	2	0
* William Marriott, Esq; six benefactions	31	10	0
* Dr. Marriott, five benefactions	11	11	0
M. L.	5	5	0
* Mr. John Molesworth, two benefactions	7	7	0
	D		
		Rev.	

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
Rev. Mr. Mason, by Mr. Horsefield	21 0 0
Miss M. F. by Mr. Gilbert, five benefactions	75 0 0
Hon. Mrs. Marsham, ten benefactions	33 12 0
M. T.	5 5 0
Lady Milner	2 2 0
Sir Horatio Mann, Bart.	5 5 0
Hon. Walter Molesworth	10 0 0
Mr. William Miller	2 2 0
James Mitchell, Esq; two benefactions	4 4 0
James Matthias, Esq;	5 5 0
Mrs. Mawhood, three benefactions	10 10 0
Thomas Marson, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	15 15 0
William Mills, Esq;	2 2 0
William Mills, jun. Esq;	2 2 0
Mrs. Mattocks, two benefactions	3 3 0
Mr. John Marson	2 2 0
Rev. Dr. Markham, in Addition to the Collection at St. Mary, Whitechapel	4 4 0
Dr. Manningham, four benefactions	12 12 0
Robert Mangles, Esq; nine benefactions	18 18 0
M. L. A. R. second benefaction un- der a different signature	10 3 3
William Morland, Esq;	10 0 0
Mr. John Musgrave	6 6 0
M. C. by I. T.	5 5 0
M. S. a Jew Lady	2 2 0
	M.

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
M. three benefactions	6 6 0
Merchant Taylor's Company	3 3 0
M. C. five benefactions	14 14 0
M. S. by Biddulph and Co. four benefactions	40 0 0
Lady Miller, fourteen benefactions	28 7 0

N.

* Hon. Mr. Justice Nares, Vice-President, nine benefactions	52 11 0
* His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, four benefactions	101 0 0
Her Grace the Dutchess of Northumberland, <i>deceased</i>	70 0 0
*s. Mr. William Neild, ten benefactions	21 0 0
* Mr. James Neild, ten benefactions	21 0 0
* Mr. Nelme, ten benefactions	21 10 0
James Norman, Esq;	10 0 0
Robert Nettleton, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	10 10 0
Nash, Edwards, and Patrie	10 10 0
Mr. Edward Neale	2 12 6
N. N. three benefactions by Mr. Willis	11 11 0
Rev. William Nowell, two benefactions	7 2 0
Mr. Francis Newbery, jun.	2 2 0
D 2	Mrs.

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	£.	s.	d.
Mrs. N. by Richard Becher, Esq;	5	5	0
Mr. Nailer	2	2	0
Noah, Daniel, and Job, eight benefactions	22	7	0
N. C. P. M.	26	5	0
Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Sunday's Club at the Thatched-House Tavern, by Thomas Dundas, Esq;	52	10	0
Mr. Cornelius Neep	2	2	0
John Newton, Esq;	10	0	0
N. R. by Mr. Sanxay, <i>deceased</i>	3	3	0
N. F. twelve benefactions	49	7	0
Noah, Job, and Cornelias	2	2	0
No. 7, Mr. Willis	4	4	0

O.

O. A. L. S. S. D.	25	4	0
Mr. Ord	10	0	0
O. Z.	2	2	0
O. A.	6	6	0

P.

The Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Peterborough	5	5	0
*s. John			

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
s. John Parson, Esq; six benefactions	12 12 0
* John Preston, Esq; ten benefactions	21 0 0
* Pantheon, by Meff. Scotney and Co.	50 0 0
Dandby Pickering, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	8 8 0
Mr. Charles Parker	4 4 0
P. F.	10 10 0
P. P.	2 2 0
Onesiphorus Paul, Esq;	3 3 0
P. C.	10 10 0
Mrs. Parish, five benefactions	6 6 0
Proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre by a Benefit Play	102 13 0
Granado Pigott, Esq;	2 2 0
Thomas Preston, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	6 6 0
Persons unknown, by the Rev. J. Craven	8 8 0
Hon. Mrs. Pultney, six benefactions	30 10 0
Proprietors of Blackstone's Commentaries	2 10 0
P. G. two benefactions	20 0 0
Mrs. Parish	7 7 0
Joseph Philips, Esq;	4 4 0
Proprietors of Drury Lane	36 14 0
Mr. Christopher Pinchbeck, <i>deceased</i> ,	8 8 0
Mr. Robert Parker	3 3 0
Mr. Thomas Pitter	2 2 0
P. C. Esq;	5 5 0
D 3	Proprietors

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, Second Benefit	8 1 1 6
Dr. P.	2 2 0
P. H. V. V.	5 5 0
P. C.	10 10 0
P. A.	15 15 0
William Pooley, Esq;	10 10 0
Francis Paddy, Esq;	10 0 0
Mr. Nathaniel Perkes	2 2 0

R.

* The Right Hon. Lord Romney, President, ten benefactions	52 10 0
Lord Romney, from a Lady unknown	5 5 0
*s. The Right Hon. Earl of Radnor, nine benefactions	73 10 0
*s. Sir Robert Rich, Bart. by Mr. Nelme, two benefactions	200 0 0
Mr. John Rice, <i>deceased</i>	6 6 0
*s. Mr. John Rawlinson, five benefactions	10 10 0
Countess of Radnor	5 5 0
R. H.	10 0 0
R. C.	8 8 0
Mrs. R. B.	15 0 0
R. H.	10 10 0
Mr. Ruspini	8 8 0
	Mr.

BENEFACTIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
Mr. Reinhold	3	3	0
Thomas Raikes, Esq; seven benefactions	14	14	0
R. M.	12	12	0
Robert Mansby, Esq; seven benefactions	14	14	0
R. E. C. three benefactions	25	5	0
Dr. Thomas Randolph	8	8	0
R. M.	10	10	0
R. I.	3	3	0
Miss Margaret Rennald	3	3	0
Mr. Richard Richardson	4	4	0
Mr. Rivington	2	2	0

S.

*s. The Right Hon. Earl of Shropshire, Vice-President, eight benefactions, by Mr. Nelme	42	0	0
*s. Earl Stamford, seven benefactions	94	10	0
* Earl Stanhope	21	0	0
The Right Honourable Lord Chief Baron Smythe, deceased	36	15	0
Lady Smythe	13	5	0
The Right Hon. Lord Scarfdale	10	0	0
The Right Hon. Lord Sondes	10	10	0
Lady Sondes	5	5	0
* Rev. Sir Martin Bart. Sykes, D.D. seventeen benefactions	170	0	0
		*s. Mr.	

BENEFACTIONS.

	<i>L. s. d.</i>
*s. Mr. John Stevens, six benefactions	12 12 0
William Strahan, Esq;	4 4 0
* Mr. Charles Steuart, eight benefactions	16 16 0
Mr. John Smith, twelve benefactions	240 0 0
Mr. Robert Sanxay, <i>deceased</i>	8 8 0
Society of Gentlemen meeting at the George and Vulture Tavern in Cornhill, by Mr. Rutt	21 0 0
Sundry Gentlemen, by A B.	31 10 0
— Simpson, Esq; by Mr. Sanxay, <i>deceased</i>	5 5 0
Mrs. Singleton, by the Treasurer, twenty-five benefactions	26 5 0
The old Thursday's Club at the St. Alban's Tavern	17 17 0
John Speaker, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	100 0 0
Sundry Gentlemen from Ipswich, by Mr. Nelme	4 16 0
Francis Schutz, Esq; three benefactions	8 8 0
Mr. Daniel Sutton	2 2 0
William Stukely, Esq;	2 2 0
Richard Salwey, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	21 0 0
S. M. four benefactions	9 9 0
Scavoir Vivre Club	52 10 0
Mrs. Anna Snelling, eight benefactions	16 16 0
James Scawen, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	5 5 0
From Staptleton's	2 2 0
S. M. eight benefactions	16 16 0
	Mr.

B E N E F A C T I O N S.

	<i>£. s. d.</i>
Mr. James Snowdon	2 2 0
John Sunderland, Esq;	2 2 0
William Scullard, Esq;	2 2 0

T.

The Hon. Lord Talbot	5 5 0
* John Thornton, Esq; late Vice-President, twelve benefactions	109 0 0
Samuel Thornton, Esq; seven benefactions	56 15 0
* The Rev. George Tilson	6 6 0
Mr. Theophilus Tutt	10 10 0
* Robert Thompson, Esq; thirteen benefactions	61 10 0
Benjamin Thomas, Esq;	21 0 0
Mrs. Anna Maria Tracy, eight benefactions	28 7 0
T. P. Esq; seven benefactions, by Mr. Nelme	87 11 0
James Tamez, Esq; of Moscow, two benefactions	45 0 0
Arthur Tyton, Esq;	6 6 0
Two Gentlemen	2 2 0
Three Ladies and one Gentleman ..	4 4 0
Hon. Mrs. Trevor	3 3 0
T. C**n	5 5 0
Mr. Alderman Trecothick, <i>deceased</i>	10 10 0
Ten of the Exchequer Jurors, by M. D.	3 3 0
	Peter

BENEFACTIONS.

	<i>f. s. d.</i>
Peter Terquhand, Esq; part of a fine from a Custom-House officer, for an illegal Seizure	4 4 0
Mr. Alex. Tate	2 2 0
Dr. T. O.	4 4 0
T. C.	15 15 0
Robert Travis, Esq;	5 0 0
T. M.	2 2 0
Mr. John Turner, <i>deceased</i>	4 4 0
T. L.	5 5 0
Two Middlesex Juries	8 0 0
Mrs. Turner	3 3 0
Hon. Mr. Temple, three benefac- tions	21 0 0
T. R.	21 0 0
T. G. I. put into the letter-box eight benefactions	76 15 0

V.

* Lord Vere	5 5 0
* Francis Vincent, Esq; five bene- factions	10 10 0
James Vere, Esq;	3 3 0
Robert Udney, Esq;	5 5 0
Mr. Js. Unsworth, two benefactions	4 4 0
Mr. Vassels	7 3 0
V. F. three benefactions	11 11 0
Unknown, by Mr. Nelme	103 10 0
Unknown, by T. G.....	100 0 0
Unknown,	

BENEFACTIONS.

	£. s. d.
Unknown, by Dr. Markham	5 5 0
U. four benefactions	10 10 0
Unknown, by P. Perchard.....	3 3 0
V. V.	3 3 0
V.	2 2 0

W.

* Edward Wheler, Esq; Vice-President, four benefactions	17 17 0
* Lord Willoughby de Broke, eight benefactions	85 15 0
Hon. H. Walpole	20 0 0
* W. W. a Lady by Mr. Nelme	100 0 0
*s. W. W. Esq; four benefactions, by James Mathias, Esq;	200 0 0
* Hon. Mr. Justice Willes	5 5 0
* C. Wyville, Esq; Executor to Sir Marmaduke Wyville	50 0 0
* Samuel Watson, Esq; four benefactions	42 0 0
* Mr. Henry Wright, six benefactions	12 12 0
* William Wilson, Esq; two benefactions	30 0 0
W. B. Esq; <i>deceased</i> seven benefactions, by Mr. Nelme	240 0 0
The Right Rev. the Bishop of Winchester, <i>deceased</i>	10 10 0
Lady Windsor	10 10 0
	Mrs.

BENEFAC TIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
Mrs. Wheler, <i>deceased</i>	5	5	0
Lady Laura Waldegrave	21	0	0
Mr. Isaac Walker, by Mr. Matthias	5	5	0
James Whitchurch, Esq; four benefactions	21	0	0
William Watson, Esq; three benefactions	6	6	0
W. Pearce, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	12	12	0
W. N.	10	10	0
Rev. Sherlock Willis	5	5	0
W. H. two benefactions	10	10	0
W. A. two benefactions	21	0	0
Mr. Thomas Williamson, two benefactions	4	4	0
John Whiston, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	3	3	0
Messrs. Waddington, of Nottingham	2	2	0
Martin Wright, Esq;	5	5	0
Mr. Wilford, <i>deceased</i>	3	3	0
Mr. Role Walter	10	0	0
W. W.	43	12	0
G. Wombwell, Esq; <i>deceased</i>	7	7	0
Mr. Emanuel Williams	4	4	0
W. F.	10	10	0
W. L. Esq;	5	0	0
W. W. V. five benefactions	31	10	0
Mr. James Willis, eight benefactions	16	16	0
Westminster Charity, by Sir Charles Whitworth, <i>deceased</i>	50	0	0
Mrs. White	2	2	0
Isaac Walker, Esq; two benefactions	10	10	0
W. H.	50	0	0
			Mr.

BENEFACTIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
Mr. George Wells	2	2	0
Mrs. Wrighten, three benefactions	6	6	0
W. D.	21	0	0
W. L. by Jos. Mathias, Esq;	6	17	6
W. M. by Dorrien and Co.	4	4	0
o o 43	43	0	0
o 2 0	2	0	0

X.

X. A. two benefactions	6	6	0
X. T five benefactions	10	10	0
X. X.	2	2	0
X. Y.	3	3	0
X. G.	4	4	0

Y.

The most Rev. Archhishop of York, two benefactions	20	10	0
Hon. Mr. York, two benefactions....	20	10	0
Hon. Dowager Lady Young, two benefactions	40	0	0
Y. Y. Y.	5	5	0
Rev. Dr. Young, Prebend of West- minster	2	2	0
Z. Z. Z.			

BENEFACTIONS.

	<i>L. s. d.</i>
o o s	100 W. George C. M.
o o o	100 W. George C. M.
o o 12	12 C. M.
o 10 0	100 W. George C. M.
o 4 4	44 C. M. W.
Z. Z. Z. eight benefactions, Dor- rien and Co.	84 0 0
Z.	5 5 0

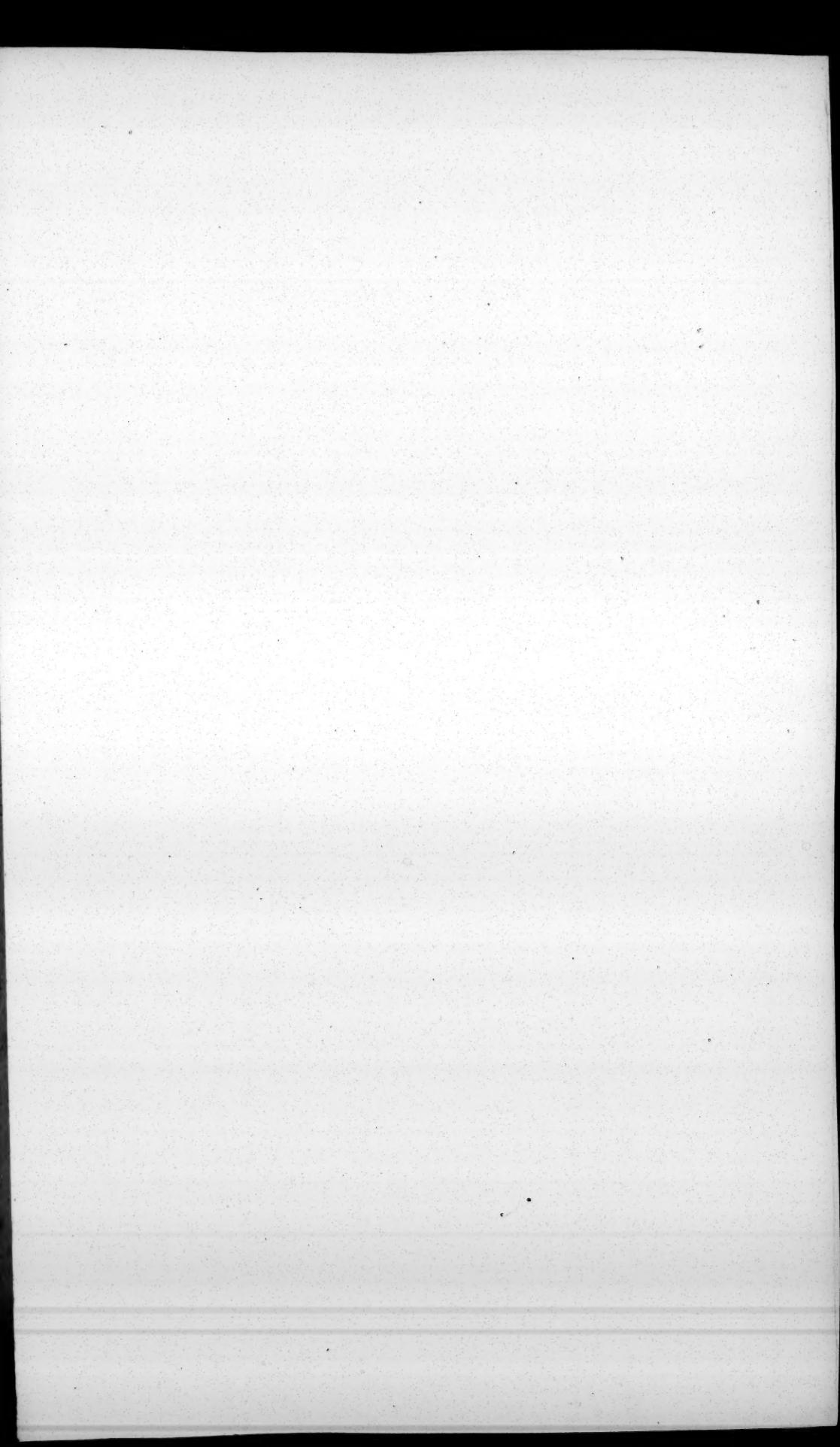
X

* * * Annual Benefactors may at any Time
recommend Objects.

o 10 0	100 W. George C. M.
o 10 0	100 W. George C. M.
o 10 0	100 W. George C. M.
o 10 0	100 W. George C. M.

A SUM-





A GENERAL ANNUAL ACCOUNT of POOR DEBTORS for the DISCHARGE and RELIEF of PERSONS

From February, 1772, to

Debtors.

1772 to 1774	1722
1775	996
1776	673
1777	877
1778	779
1779	811
1780	628
1781	321
1782	389
1783	547
Debtors	7743
They had Wives	4688
And Children	14276

26707

The AVERAGE for the above-mentioned 7743 Debtors is nearly 2*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.* each ; and the AVERAGE for the Individuals, is nearly 1*3s.* 3*d.* each ; it is probable, the PUBLIC BENEVOLENCE has been diffused to twice that Number, because many of the Families of the Creditors who accepted Composition for their respective Debts, being in very necessitous Circumstances, were also benefited by the Composition paid to them.—The Society never pay the FULL DEBT ; yet, to prevent future Litigations, the several Creditors give FULL DISCHARGES. It is to be observed, that the above Averages include EVERY incidental EXPENCE attending the Management and Distributions of this Charity.

From the number of Debtors discharged, and the small Sums paid for each of them, it is manifest those poor Manufacturers, Seamen, and Servants, who have been the peculiar Objects of the Society's Attention, are in the humblest Rank of Society ; their Debts were too small, and too few to entitle them to the Benefits derived from any of the Acts intended to relieve Insolvent Debtors ; the Society have, therefore, generally compounded their Debts and paid their Fees, *after* the Writ of Execution was issued. The Time of Imprisonment may be Months or Years before they can have Relief from Insolvent Acts of Parliament ; it follows, that so long a Confinement in Prison, from their Families and Employments, would be attended by Consequences fatal to those Families, and very injurious to their Employers, whether Manufacturers or others ; and to their several Parishes ; who, whilst the Husband is in Prison, must relieve the Wife and Family.—The Society never refuse their Assistance to Persons that may be benefited by the several Acts of Parliament for Insolvent Debtors, provided their Sobriety, Integrity, and Industry is vouched for by People of Reputation.

In Prisons, some especially, the Debtors are obliged to associate with Felons, whose Dissipation, Disposition to Idleness and Rapacity, too frequently influence the Inclinations of the Debtors, with whom they converse, and who, until such fascinating Connections, were not abandoned to Vice, though perhaps imprudent ; to such the Society have ever shewn a fraternal Regard, by rescuing them from an Imprisonment, infectious both to Body and Mind ; their Families their from becoming Vagabonds or chargeable to their Parishes, and preserving to Manufactures, Agriculture, and Trade, laborious Associates ; who, in regard to their Connections in the larger or smaller Circles of Society, are, ultimately, the Nerves, and Riches of the Community, and the Strength of the Nation ; inasmuch as their Labor contributes efficiently, though almost imperceptibly, to the Welfare of every individual in the superior Orders of Society.

N. B. The ACT of 1778, to prevent Imprisonment for Sums under TEN POUNDS, doth no way impede the Operations of the Society, and Execution issued :—Imprisonment for Debt, before Judgment is given, is inconsistent with the benign Spirit of the

PERSONS disposed to contribute to the Support of this Charity, may see the Books of the Society's Transactions, at
No 7, CRAVEN-STRE

DEBTORS discharged from sundry Prisons in *Great Britain*, by the SOCIETY
PERSONS imprisoned for SMALL DEBTS.

72, to March 30, 1783.

Debtors.

	£	s.	d.
1722	4	6	22 17 1
996	1	7	11
673	1	8	42 13 3
877	1	7	29 19 7
779	1	7	64 0 11
811	1	6	11 15 3
628	1	2	88 17 1
321	8	2	28 15 9
389	9	3	35 3 9
547	11	2	21 12 3
7743			
4688			
14276			

26707 { Persons immediate-
ly benefited by this } £ 17469 16 10
Charity for

Influenced by these Considerations, which the SOCIETY esteem as *firm Principles*, founded upon sound Policy, true Philanthropy, and, above all, upon the benevolent Precepts of genuine Christianity; they hope, by the Bounty of the Public, to be enabled to persevere in relieving those Debtors, who may be found *worthy, distressed, and friendless* Members of the Community, whose Earnings, when in Employment, afford but a bare Subsistence, because of the *increasing Disproportion of the Price of Labor to the Price of Provisions*; but unemployed, they must either contract Debts—rob—or starve; yet, if it were possible for them to impose upon the Society *ONCE*, they cannot be relieved a *SECOND Time* by the Rules of the Society; which Precaution effectually prevents Impositions by the Cunning and Indolent, who may be disposed to throw themselves into Gaol, to receive the Society's Bounty: Besides this, the Society have a *Rule*; *Never to pay more than a Composition for any Debts*; wherein the Lawyers Bills are never included; so that the Plaintiffs are always *Losers* by their Prosecutions for Debt, though more or less so, according to their Circumstances, which the Society ever take into Consideration; and it is a principal Object of their Attention to demonstrate to the lower Class of People the exceeding Folly of being stimulated by their Passions, to go to Law with their fellow Creatures, poor and miserable as themselves.

James Neild, *Treasurer*,
William Hill,
Thomas Dawes,
Richard Graswell,
John Rawlinson,
William Faden,
Henry Wright,
Charles Steuart.

ROMNEY, President.
SHIPBROOK,
BEAUCHAMP, } Vice-Presidents.
G. NARES.

N. B. EDWARD WHEELER, Esq; *Vice-President*, is abroad.

L. D. Nelme, *Sec.*

of the usual **LEGAL** Process for any small Sums:—But no Debtor can be imprisoned for such small Sums until Judgment is given in accordance with the spirit of the English CONSTITUTION and LAWS.

Persons, and receive any further Information, by enquiring of the Secretary, between the Hours of Eleven and Two, at
N-STREET, STRAND.